

BING

**SUMMER
1998**



No. 119



THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950

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Mainland Europe, including Eire	£9 per annum
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All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) U.S. and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material ©Copyright ICC 1998.

EDITORIAL

Inevitably this issue must be overshadowed by the death of Frank Sinatra. Frank's impact on the popular music scene of the last 60 years has been immense and we mourn his passing. From the pureness of tone and effortless singing of the young Frankie, to the emotional balladeer of the early 50s, to the swinger of the mid fifties and beyond, he was a giant of what is now known as the easy listening scene. Always looking to sing quality items, Frank did so much to preserve the great songs of the past and his classic performances on record will live on forever. The plethora of tributes and souvenir magazines have covered all aspects of his life very fully and it is probably not appropriate to attempt to do the same here. Ken Crossland has written separately in this edition about the death of Frank as has Keith Parkinson and also several contributors also mention his passing which has given us the scope to use many photographs of Bing and Frank together. It was nice to read in so many of the tributes how Frank was inspired to go into show business by Bing and how pleasing it must have been for Frank to work with his idol on so many occasions.

You will notice that we now have an Internet address which Michael mentions more fully. I have also gone on to the Net and I have been amazed at how much is going on in this still relatively new media. Our member Steven Lewis of Kansas City has, for some time, been running what has become the leading Crosby site on the Net without doubt. The rapid communication which is possible

using e-mail has also helped the interface with those members who possess the same facilities and for instance the articles from Michael Crampton, Ken Crossland and Scott Whalen in this magazine came via that system. I think that it is probably true to say that Internet usage is far more prevalent in the USA than in the UK but no doubt we shall catch up eventually.

In his article, Wig mentions my recent visit to see him and we had a great time discussing Crosby matters and carrying out some research. In New York, my wife and I had dinner with Ernest Sutkowski, his daughter Karen and son-in-law Dale. An absolutely splendid evening in every way, I thanked Ernest on behalf of world-wide Crosbyana for his efforts in keeping Bing's name alive through his support of so many radio presenters. Naturally as I passed through places where Bing had appeared in the past, I made quick visits to the local library to obtain press cuttings, with some success as you will read later. The big news from the USA is that Bing's film 'Top O' The Morning' has been shown on television. Let's hope it is shown over here soon.

Finally, I have moved house since the last edition and please see the inside cover for my new details. I have arranged to have my mail re-directed until May 1999 in case anyone uses the old address.

Malcolm Macfarlane



SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

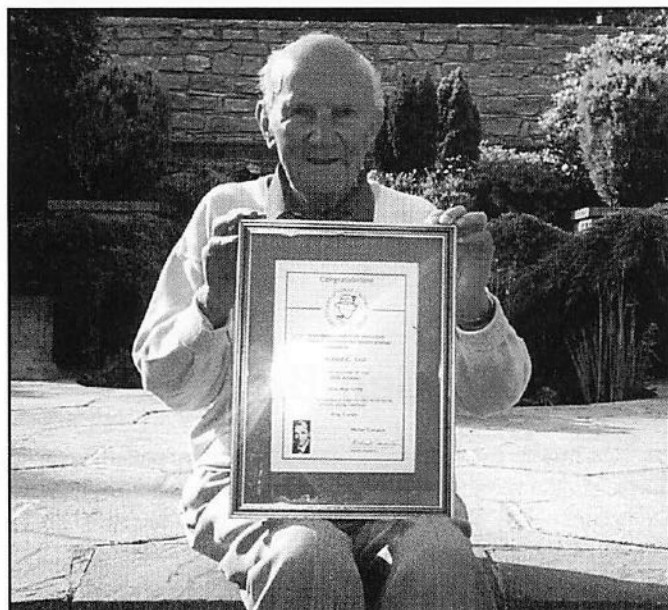
RARE RECORD FIND?

Although it is often said that everything there is to say about Bing Crosby has been said, nothing could be further from the truth. Bing's career has been well chronicled but as Malcolm's Diary has demonstrated, we constantly receive new information which enriches our knowledge of Bing's long and colourful life. Recently I received a letter from Don Spearman.

Don's godfather was the Marquis of Donegal and he had a private recording studio in a property at Hyde Park Gate, London. In 1952 Don was gifted a 12" 78 containing the titles: "Feudin', Fightin' and Fussini' / I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now" with the recording marked DONEGAL RECORDING. Lord Donegal was President of the National Jazz Federation and his wife's parents owned Cranbourne Court where Bing stayed when he played golf at Wentworth. So far it has not been possible to hear the recording to establish if the titles are commercial recordings or not but by Winter 1998 we hope to bring you an update on this interesting story.

OUR OLDEST MEMBER?

On May 29, member Harold Paul of Haslemere in Surrey attained the age of 90 and by arrangement with his son-in-law Kenneth Steel, my son Shaun prepared a very nice certificate which was presented to Harold on the great day. The certificate was A4 size and we reproduce below a photograph of Harold with the framed scroll at his birthday celebration.



Is Harold our oldest member? Please write and tell me if you are older than Harold.

RON FIELD VISITS ENGLAND

Australian member Ron Field's interest in Bing was featured in an earlier edition of BING and it was a great

pleasure to meet with him at the home of Malcolm Macfarlane on Easter Monday. Ron Bosley had brought along some of his monumental scrap books and time did not permit Ron (Field) the joy of discovering all the wonderful data/pictures in these great tomes. Ron kindly left his scrap book for Ron (Bosley) to photograph those rare items which he did not have copies of. Pat Macfarlane provided a sumptuous meal to round off a wonderful day in Cheadle Hulme.



Michael greets Ron Field.

NEW MEMBERS

AUSTRALIA

John Wright, one of our members in Scarborough, Queensland has been assisting David with recruitment and we are delighted with the result. John brings six new members into the fold and we extend a warm hand to Messrs Gillette, Pursey, Bridger, Cassell, Traynor and Pitts, all of Queensland.

ENGLAND

A warm welcome is extended to- Mr. C J Organ (East Yorks.), Mr. P A J West (Edinburgh), Mr. J Cook (Wilts), Mr. B O'Dell (London), Mr. M Tyce (Oxford), Mr. A Bone (Fife), Mr. J Peters (Cambridge), Mr. J Rose (Hants), Mr. R Thorpe (North Yorks.) Mr. S D Wills (Essex), Steve Shaw (Liverpool).

BRAZIL

Rogério Costa Pereira found us via the Internet and he becomes our fourth member in this very popular country!

DEATHS

We have been advised of the deaths of Jean-Paul Frereault of Canada and Tom Shaw of Liverpool since the last edition. Our sincere condolences to both families. Tom Shaw's son, Steve, has decided to take over his late father's subscription and is shown above as a new member. Malcolm comments more fully on the passing of Jean-Paul elsewhere in this issue and I will not therefore duplicate his remarks.

THE ICC JOINS THE INTERNET

The International Crosby Circle has taken out a trial subscription to the Net and already we have had around 300 visits to our site. Prospective members are also contacting us via this ever increasing popular means of communicating and access to the Circle and its representatives will ensure that our activities are known internationally.

Our address is- [www. users. globalnet. co. uk/~iccircle](http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~iccircle)

The International Crosby Circle home page is being developed and eventually users will be able to download information about Bing's career. Do contact us to let us know your e-mail address if you are on the net.

DONATIONS

We are grateful for donations from Michael Baxter, Matthew Sprott, Mr. A Stead, Trevor Wagstaff and Mr S D Wills.

Our collections continue to be enriched with the issue of new CDs and although Jim Reilly will cover the following two issues in his comprehensive report I would like to add my congratulations to Ken Barnes and John McNicholas for their recent very fine releases.

LEEDS 1998

Our 33rd Dinner/Meeting will be held on Sunday 4th of October 1998 and all are cordially invited to share the joys of this special day.

Until Winter 1998, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton

LETTER FROM LESLIE

Yet again the last issue of BING proved to be a winner and full marks must go to all concerned in its production and presentation. I for one enjoyed its total contents, which I was happy to share with a good many members. The front cover photo and the back page poster looked great in colour.

It was also nice to note that thanks to the enterprising efforts of many people within our midst many good things continue to come our way. I refer to the good offices of Ken Barnes and his associate Peter Reynolds who will be producing CDs of Bing's radio shows. I know that many members will agree with me that Bing was at his best and most relaxed on radio. I shall look forward to these CDs. People like John McNicholas should also be congratulated for his work on the Chronological Bing Crosby series. We are still getting good things from MCA and I look forward to the follow up album to "Memories" which I am pleased to be associated with along with fellow members Ernest Sutkowski, Stan White and Jim Reilly. Wig Wiggins is doing good work and Bing seems to be featured more prominently in the States.

I was pleased to see Lionel Pairpoint's comments concerning the 1998 calendar. I too was baffled by some of the song inclusions and I take Lionel's point about the Trades Description Act. It is indeed a very nice calendar and I hope that we get one for 1999.

Member Ernest Sutkowski has informed me that Mozelle Seger was voted California Grandmother of the year by the American Mothers Inc. which is a national organisation whose purpose it is to contribute to the strengthening of the moral and spiritual foundation of family and home. Mozelle received her award at a special luncheon ceremony on March 7th 1998 in Los Angeles. You no doubt know that Mrs Mozelle Seger was Bing's treasurer / bookkeeper at the Crosby Office and she also performed that role for Kathryn and for Mary Frances. I had a great deal of contact with Mozelle for many years and I am pleased she got this award. Well done Mozelle.

Over the years I have acquired quite a few possessions of which I am very proud and pleased to own. Among these is a Christmas card I received from Peter Reynolds last year. This is a caricature of Peter and his assistant engineer and there is a little picture of Bing in the background.

Those members who have wanted the Bing and Buddy Cole material to be issued in compact disc form will be pleased to note that this has finally come about in the UK. It is very good to have all these songs from the New Tricks and Some Fine Old Chestnuts LPs all together on one CD. No doubt Jim Reilly will cover this in his review section.

It was a sad loss to the world of entertainment when Frank Sinatra departed this life. Frank certainly gave a lifetime of pleasure to a great many people and if anyone will be missed it will be Frank. For sure he was a great entertainer and like Bing he leaves a large legacy of songs to the world. I am sure that his voice again like Bing's will be heard for many years to come. I hear that David Jacobs is going to produce a ten-part radio tribute to Frank in the autumn.

My best wishes to everyone

Leslie Gaylor

Bing with Ben Bernie?

Further to the queries regarding, 'It All Depends On You' purported to have been sung by Bing with the Ben Bernie Orchestra (See Winter & Spring issues). By the good offices of our Australian correspondent, David Currington and from the collection of Warrent Sargent (also an ICC member) comes a copy of the original 1927, commercial recording, by Ben Bernie. I have listened to the single chorus performed as a vocal duet. On a bad day, with an unfavourable wind, you might be eavesdropping on a neighbour's radio, through the party wall and say, "Is that Bing and Al Rinker?" but you would only say it once because then, you would realise that it was none other than Scrappy Lambert and Billy Hillpot (Who?), sometime

vocalists with the Bernie Band. David may have hit the nail on the head when he suggests that the announcer on the "radio transcription" may be a wrongly informed disc jockey, introducing the record but of course, this theory would be destroyed if the copy in John Joyce's possession was a solo rather than a duet. Meanwhile, you might like to get your teeth into this quotation (bearing in mind that

the writer has heard it) "..... remember when Bing Crosby whistled on his records? He does it again on his new disc, 'Small Hotel' and it sounds like old times". ("San Francisco Chronicle" 3rd August 1936)

Lionel Pairpoint

BING IN THE USA

THE MACFARLANES VISIT THE WIGGINSES

My wife, Laura, and I were very pleased to welcome Pat and Malcolm Macfarlane back to the Washington, D.C. area in June for their second visit. We had first met them, together with their twin daughters, back in 1994. After driving down from New York, Pat and Malcolm were here for three days before flying off for two weeks in the West and a return to Manchester via Salt Lake City. Malcolm and I spent one day at the U.S. National Archives located adjacent to the campus of the University of Maryland in College Park, in search of information about Bing's World War II activities on behalf of the USO and War Bond sales. It turned out to be a fascinating and productive experience. And if the Macfarlanes are able to return next year, as we certainly hope they will, your two intrepid Management Team members plan to conduct further research on Bing's career at the Library of Congress in downtown Washington, D.C. It is surprising what still turns up in such records about Bing's activities that often has not been known previously.

PUBLIC SHOWING OF BING'S HILLSBOROUGH HOME

From April 26th through May 24th, Bing's estate in Hillsborough, California (near San Francisco) was open to the public for the first time since his death. Bing's home was the featured attraction in the 1998 Directors Showhouse Tour held to benefit charitable activities in the San Francisco Bay area. Various rooms in the French-style mansion were redecorated by leading California designers and decorators for the showing, which attracted large crowds throughout the month in which it was open. Many Bing fans toured his home, including members of the American Club Crosby (BINGANG), the California-based Bing's Friends and Collectors Society and the International Crosby Circle. ICC member Priscilla Koernig, Past President of Club Crosby and a personal friend of Bing over many years, served as one of the tour guides in the mansion during the showing. At my request, Priscilla has written a special article about her experiences at Hillsborough which can be found elsewhere in this issue of BING.

COMPACT DISC SURVEY

Recently, I sent a survey form to American and Canadian members of the ICC, asking them to indicate which types of Bing's Decca recordings they would like to have released on compact disc. Response to the survey was excellent, and I would like to thank all the members who made the effort to respond. I have submitted the results to

fellow ICC member Bob Zipkin of MCA Records in California for his consideration in determining possible future issues in his popular "Bing's Favorite Songs" series of budget CDs. In particular, members expressed a strong preference for composer-oriented CDs, similar to those released originally on 10-inch Decca LPs back in the 1950's. Although there can be no guarantee that MCA will, in fact, release any of the requested CDs—since market considerations must always govern their decisions—the survey does provide an interesting indication of what ICC members would like to add to their personal CD collections. Here is the rank order of preferences from the survey, and the percentage of votes for each category of song:

- 1 - Bing Sings Jerome Kern (61%)
- 2 - Bing Sings Stephen Foster (53%)
- 3 - Bing Sings George Gershwin (53%)
- 4 - Bing Sings With Big Bands (52%)
- 5 - Bing Sings Cole Porter (51%)
- 6 - Le Bing-French Songs (48%)
- 7 - Bing Sings Irving Berlin (47%)
- 8 - Bing Sings Victor Herbert (47%)
- 9 - Bing's Favorite Movie Songs (45%)
- 10 - Bing's Favorite Broadway Songs (41%)
- 11 - Bing Sings Rodgers & Hammerstein (41%)
- 12 - Bing Sings With Buddy Cole (41%)
- 13 - El Bingo-Spanish Songs (40%)
- 14 - Bing's Favorite Duets (38%)
- 15 - Bing's Favorite Patriotic Songs (38%)

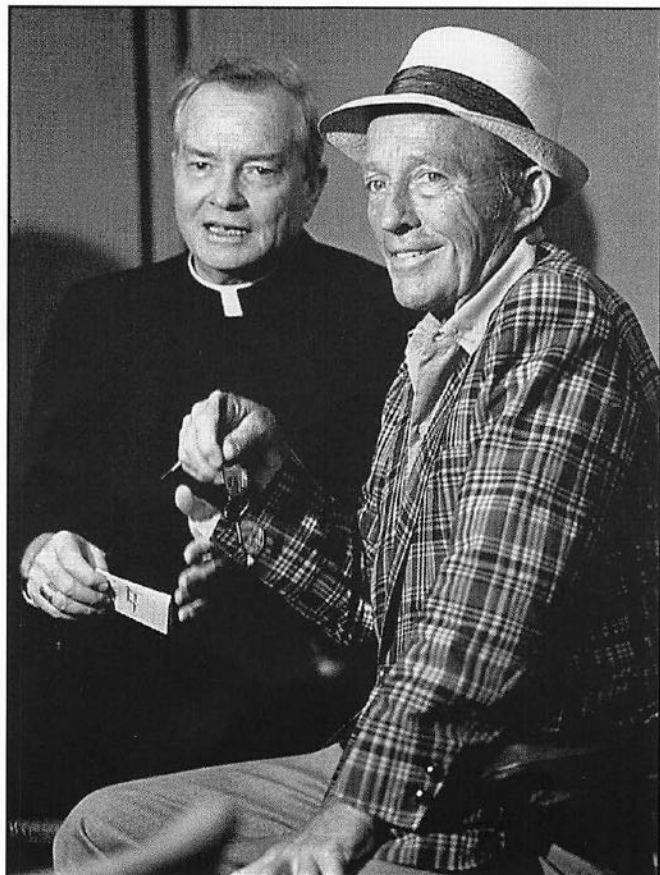
Are your favorites on the list? If not, please let me know. And in the meanwhile, I will be trying to convince MCA to rescue at least some of these Decca recordings from their vaults, so keep your fingers crossed.

BING'S 1976 VISIT TO NEW ORLEANS

Fellow ICC member Ron Cannatella, host of a popular daily program on radio station WADU-FM in New Orleans which features many of Bing's records, has been searching for further details of Bing's appearance there in September 1976 as the leading artist at the Archdiocesan Charities Ball (reported previously in BING 116 and BING 117). Ron's efforts have produced a marvelous group of pictures of Bing's visit, which were taken by a photographer for the Archdiocesan newspaper and apparently have never been published before. One set was taken on Bing's arrival at the New Orleans airport, where he was met by Archbishop Philip Hannan and the Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana, Jimmy Fitzmorris; and the second set while Bing was performing on stage that evening at the Charity Ball. What is most striking to me

about the airport photos is the fact that Bing flew to New Orleans on a private jet with just the pilot to accompany him. No entourage--no handlers--no security. Just Bing, as was so often the case, when he traveled.

Our thanks to Ron Cannatella for locating this fascinating record of another incident in Bing's career which was unknown before. A selection of these photos can be found below.



BING CROSBY IN THE 50's

Fellow ICC member Gary Hamann of Los Angeles has produced a third volume in his best-selling series of books about Bing's life and career, which contain verbatim accounts from the leading California newspapers of the era. As a successor to *BING CROSBY IN THE 30's* and *BING CROSBY IN THE 40's*, Gary's new book takes Bing through many changes prior to his "near retirement" in the 1960's. *BING CROSBY IN THE 50's* is 110 pages in length, 8.5 by 11 inches in size, and illustrated with newspaper advertisements for many of Bing's films made during the period. Only 150 copies have been printed for worldwide sale, and they will be available only while supplies last. So don't delay if you would like to have a copy of this unusual book about Bing in your collection. American and Canadian ICC members can order *BING CROSBY IN THE 50's* from me for \$29.95 (postpaid). Members in the United Kingdom and Europe should order from Michael Crampton, and those in Australia and New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY: THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS

At the request of fellow ICC member Andy McKaie, Vice President of MCA Records in Los Angeles, I have compiled the track listing for a new MCA two-disc package of Bing's Decca Christmas recordings for release during the forthcoming 1998 holiday season. This set will feature at least one version of every winter holiday song that Bing recorded for Decca between 1935 and 1956, including the Christmas titles from Bing's best-selling 12-inch LPs "Merry Christmas" and "That Christmas Feeling", as well as at least ten other songs that have not previously been released on compact disc in the United States. There will be a total of 44 titles, many of which have been out-of-print in any format for quite some time. Two extremely rare tracks will be included that have never been released commercially before: Bing's first Decca version of "Silent Night" recorded on February 21, 1935 for private sale by the St. Columban Missionary Society (DLA-97); and the first, unissued version of "White Christmas" that Bing recorded on May 29, 1942 (DLA-3009A). These two rare tracks alone will make this new MCA compact disc set an absolute must for Crosby collectors everywhere. I will be working with Andy McKaie on this new MCA project over the next few months and will be writing the liner notes for the CD booklet. I hope that ICC members will welcome the opportunity to add "Bing Crosby: The Voice of Christmas" to their collections, and that it also will be a best-seller with the general public as well.

SO YOU THINK YOU HAVE A "COMPLETE" CROSBY COLLECTION?

Those ICC members who continue their quest for the Holy Grail—a copy of every one of Bing's recordings—have their work cut out for them once again! Fellow ICC member Ken Gray of Pittsburgh, one of the leading American Crosby collectors, has brought to my attention a recording that Bing reportedly made in 1942 with Bob

Wills and his Texas Playboys that has never been mentioned in any of the books or discographies about Bing. And no—Ken doesn't have a copy himself—he only learned about it from a biography of Bob Wills published some ten years ago (*SAN ANTONIO ROSE: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF BOB WILLS* by Charles Townsend, University of Illinois Press, 1986).

According to Chapter 14 of this book, which provides an interesting history of Bob Wills' most famous song "San Antonio Rose" and the revised version, "New San Antonio Rose" (yes—there is a difference—the original had no lyrics!), both Bob and Bing had much to be thankful for where this hit was concerned. While Bing was grateful to Bob Wills for writing it (Bing's Decca recording in 1940 became his second official gold record), Bob Wills was certain that Bing's version was the turning point in his own career and played a large role in changing Wills' image from that of a regional southwestern "country" artist to that of a national music figure. And then, in 1942, Bing was on a War Bond tour that took him to Oklahoma, which was Bob Wills' home base at the time. According to page 197 of the Wills biography, "New San Antonio Rose" was still so popular that Bing recorded it with Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys in September of that year on the eighteenth green of the Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa. Reportedly, the recording was made by a mobile unit from Tulsa radio station KVOO and given to the person who made the largest War Bond pledge during the day's performance. The Wills biography also reports that Bing and Bob Wills may have recorded several other songs that day, including "Jingle, Jangle, Jingle", "Sweet Lorraine", "Mexicali Rose" and "Melancholy Baby", all of which were given away in exchange for War Bond pledges.

Does any Crosby collector know of anyone who has any of these one-of-a-kind field recordings from 1942 by Bing and Bob Wills in their collections today? If so, please telephone a member of the ICC Management Team—collect—immediately! The Bob Wills biography even includes a photograph of Bing (sans toupee) and Bob Wills reportedly taken "while they were recording 'New San Antonio Rose' in Tulsa" on that September day back in 1942. It is reproduced here so that you can judge for yourself. A previously-unknown Crosby recording—or recordings? Just maybe!

"TOP O' THE MORNING" ON TELEVISION

For years, Crosby video collectors have been searching for a good copy of one of Bing's rarest films, "Top O' the Morning", which he made in 1949 with Barry Fitzgerald, Ann Blyth and Hume Cronyn. Although many of Bing's films have been shown on television from time-to-time over the past decade, "Top O' the Morning" has not been one of them. So it was quite a surprise to learn from American Movie Classics that it would finally be shown over their cable network first on June 25th and then on July 23! I alerted as many ICC members as possible by telephone about this unexpected showing, so that they

could tape copies for their video collections. At this writing, I do not know if AMC will repeat "Top O' the Morning" in future months, as they usually do with their films, but ICC members who might have missed it should be on the lookout for that possibility. Now we can only hope that AMC, or another cable channel, might also televise some of Bing's other films that have not been seen for years, including such early favorites as "Mississippi", "Pennies From Heaven", "Sing You Sinners", "East Side of Heaven" and "If I Had My Way". And dare we ask that some television network might even come up with a good print of Bing's "lost film" from 1934, "Here Is My Heart" with Kitty Carlisle and that great musical score that features "June In January" and "Love Is Just Around the Corner"? Surely, there is a good copy of "Here Is My Heart" in a film collection somewhere in the world!?

BING ON TELEVISION

In addition to "Top O' the Morning", a number of Bing's other films continued to appear on nationwide broadcast and cable television channels in the United States during the past four months. Here is the complete list of those that were reported to me by various ICC members:

March 1998

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S - March 10 - (Turner Classic Movies)
 BLUE SKIES - March 3 - (American Movie Classics)
 A CONNECTICUT YANKEE - March 7 - (American Movie Classics)
 GOING MY WAY - March 11 - (American Movie Classics)
 ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - March 7 - (American Movie Classics)
 WELCOME STRANGER - March 12 - (American Movie Classics)

April 1998

HIGH SOCIETY - April 23 - (WOR-TV, New York)
 HIGH SOCIETY - April 29 - (Turner Classic Movies)
 HIGH TIME - April 5,6,7,8,18,19 - (Fox Movie Channel)
 HIGH TIME - April 6,12,16,17,21 - (Showtime East)
 JUST FOR YOU - April 29 - (Cinemax East & Pacific)
 REACHING FOR THE MOON - April 17 (American Movie Classics)
 THE ROAD TO HONG KONG - April 18 - (Turner Classic Movies)
 ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - April 19 - (American Movie Classics)
 SGT. BILKO PRESENTS BING CROSBY - April 19 - (TVLand)

May 1998

ANYTHING GOES (1936) - May 30 - (WLIW-TV, New York)
 ANYTHING GOES (1956) - May 30 - (WLIW-TV, New York)
 BLUE SKIES - May 13 - (American Movie Classics)
 A CONNECTICUT YANKEE - May 23 - (American Movie Classics)
 HERE COMES THE GROOM - May 3,4,12,16,22 - (Showtime East)
 HIGH TIME - May 2,3 - (Fox Movie Channel)
 HIGH TIME - May 4,13,14,31 - (Encore Love Channel)

HIGH TIME - May 8,13,18,19,28 - (Flix Movie Channel)
 REACHING FOR THE MOON - May 8 - (American Movie Classics)
 ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - May 15 - (American Movie Classics)
 FLIP WILSON SHOW (Bing and the Supremes) - May 24 - (TVLand)

June 1998

THE EMPEROR WALTZ - June 22 - (American Movie Classics)
 HERE COMES THE GROOM - June 5,9,14,22,23,27 (Flix Movie Channel)
 HIGH SOCIETY - June 10 - (Turner Movie Classics)
 HIGH TIME - June 1, 10, 21 - (Fox Movie Channel)
 JUST FOR YOU - June 16 - (Cinemax East)
 REACHING FOR THE MOON - June 4 - (American Movie Classics)
 ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS - June 13 - (American Movie Classics)
 THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT - June 9,28 - (Cinemax East)
 TOP O' THE MORNING - June 25 - (American Movie Classics)
 VARIETY GIRL - June 24 - (American Movie Classics)
 WELCOME STRANGER - June 11 - (American Movie Classics)
 FLIP WILSON SHOW (Bing, Tim Conway, Melba Moore) - June 19, 20 (TVLand)

That's all the news from this side of the Atlantic for the summer, but I look forward to being with everyone again in BING 120, when the winter winds begin to blow and the Christmas holiday season is on the way. Until then, the best of luck in your Bing collecting.

F.B. (Wig) Wiggins

(Editor: I am amazed by the activity on the Bing scene in the USA! The numbers of films being shown are remarkable and "Top O' the Morning" appearing at last is fantastic news. Wig mentions the disc cut by Bing on the golf course in 1942 and it seems that this was not a unique occurrence as you will read in the following article.)

BING - A DIARY OF A LIFETIME

Before my appeal for members to carry out research in the last edition of BING had even been despatched, I received a most welcome envelope of press cuttings from Scott Whalen of Columbus, Ohio. Scott had been digging out some marvellously detailed information about Bing's Old Gold radio shows with Paul Whiteman for Lionel Pairpoint which has supplemented the work done by Philip Evans in his book 'Bix - Man and Legend'. Following receipt of this most thorough and in-depth research, I asked Scott if he could also look up Bing's visits to his locality over the years. Scott was delighted to help and he first of all picked up the visit of the Whiteman troupe to Youngstown, Ohio in January, 1927. The Vindicator newspaper of January 17 had a long review of the performance by Whiteman and his entourage and it includes the following:

"Two of the boys in the band sing a la Van and Schenk, and are artists of real ability."

This was obviously a reference to Crosby and Rinker who were sometimes likened to Van and Schenk who were a comedy-musical team, prominent in the mid-1920s and who had major successes with songs such as 'Ain't We Got Fun' and 'Carolina in the Morning'.

The next cutting was from the Cleveland, Ohio paper 'Plain Dealer' of August 21, 1928 in which a review of the variety programme at the Palace is given.

'Three of Paul Whiteman's do-do-ee-o boys sizzle rhythms up to 212 degrees on the Palace's current bill. With a couple of pianos and a half cymbal (or is that circular piece of bell-toned brass a couple of other fellows?), they heat up the atmosphere of a refrigerated theater with several kinds of melodies, products of the newest school of bu-loos. Their comedy is rather gorgeous and quite in keeping with their distinctive styles of pah-pah-te-ah anthems to 'Mississippi Mud' and 'That's My Weakness Now.'

So, very favourable and did these good reviews go to the heads of the Rhythm Boys? Bing mentioned in his book that they started doing comedy routines which were not fully appreciated by the audience and perhaps the review from the Canton, Ohio 'Evening Repository' of 19th. October, 1928 confirms this.

"Because the name 'Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys' was billed in conspicuous letters, patrons of the Palace where the boys are entertaining for the last half of the week, expected the vocalists to headline the Appreciation week program. First-day audiences were not disappointed, although it was pretty generally agreed that the Six Dauntton-Shaws gave the vocal artists a good run for their honors. There is no doubt about it, these Rhythm Boys can sing - when they want to. But for many in the audience last night, there was too much attempted clowning and too little harmonising. There is no doubt either, but that the boys have a unique and interesting manner of presenting their song hits, if only there were more of them. It's a good act as it stands, but to this reviewer's way of thinking, could be made much better. However, be sure and hear the boys sing."

Well, as we know, things did change and whilst the Six Dauntton-Shaws disappeared from the face of the Earth, the Rhythm Boys continued to prosper. Bing's next appearance in the area was in Cincinnati in 1942 and we reproduce the article from the newspaper which gives the full picture.

Does anyone know, what song Bing recorded on the golf course? In view of the information provided by Ken Gray, there must be a lot of these 'unique' discs. I'll bet Jack Souther has got some in his collection!

Scott also sent me cuttings of Bing's charity golf appearance in Cincinnati on June 7, 1947 and also his visit to Columbus on May 24/25, 1976 when unfortunately he had to be hospitalised after choking on a chicken bone. All of these items add to our knowledge of Bing's life and naturally I have added them to the master copy of the 'diary'.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1942

Crosby To Be Here Today To Aid USO War Effort

BY SUE GOODWIN.

Today is going to be more than just a golf day at Kenwood. Bing Crosby is here for his USO golf exhibition, but it will be a festive occasion afterward. In fact, as soon as Bing hits the eighteenth green something different will happen—he'll make a recording right there in the open on the USO recording machine and auction off the record—perhaps several of them. This will probably take place around 6:30 o'clock in the evening, as the match, beginning at 3, will take about three and a half hours.

All high school students showing a ticket for the Crosby exhibition will be permitted by their principal to leave school in time to see the whole show. Over 100 soldiers from Fort Thomas will be guests, not only for the golf round but the dinner and USO dance to follow on the Kenwood Country Club veranda.

One of the novelties of this charity affair will be the girl caddies. Curtis Bryan, Kenwood pro, will have his pupil and Kenwood champion, Mrs. Charles Heutle, as his "boon" companion; Mrs. Ken Diamond will try to keep up to the long-strided Byron Nelson; Mrs. Mont Reid must not overlook Jimmie Demaret, remembering what a long iron man he is, and Mrs. Norman Hill will be the envy of all the girl spectators as she tees for Bing.

Many people do not know what USO stands for. These are the initials of United Service Organizations which embrace war agencies of all sects and denominations. In World War I certain organizations functioned separately, such as the Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, and various Jewish agencies. In this emergency they have combined forces, cut overhead and are rendering a wonderful service to the boys in khaki all over the country.

At 15 minutes past the hour, every hour, the Kenwood bus will

be waiting at the end of the Madisonville car line. At a quarter to the hour, on the hour, another Kenwood bus will be stationed at the end of the Kennedy Heights car line.

Golf exhibitions in Cincinnati have never been much of a success, but if the participants of this foursome, Nelson, Bryan, Demaret, and Bing Crosby are let down after they make real sacrifices to put on this charity the golf show, Cincinnati never deserves another opportunity to see worth-while performers. A ticket costs \$1.10.

Another member who took the trouble to go to her local library was Goldie Lynn of Topeka, Kansas and she sent us press cuttings describing Bing and Bob Hope's visit to Topeka on June 3, 1945. In front of a crowd of over 8,000 fans, Bing and Bob played golf at Topeka Country Club for the benefit of the Shawnee County War Memorial Fund. After describing the golf, the report continued:

"But it was the wisecracks for which most of the Topekans hungered. Once a four-engined bomber flew over at a fairly low altitude. 'That's my

laundry,' Hope yelled into the microphone which followed then around. 'Drop it at the hotel, boys.' Crosby who has five sons (sic) came back with:

"Man! I thought for a minute that was the stork again."

Hope grinned and said:

"Your stork never had four engines."

And later in the report:

"Hope said: 'I played golf with Crosby's son, Frank Sinatra. We had a little trouble though. The caddy kept putting him back in the bag.'"

I do hope many other members in the USA will be able to carry out similar research in their local libraries and our very grateful thanks to Scott and Goldie for everything they have done. If we have any members in Texas who could help, this would be invaluable because Bing seemed to spend some time there and we know virtually nothing about his visits.

Incidentally, the Diary is now available on the Internet through the marvellous site maintained by Steven Lewis with a nice link through to Michael Crampton via e-mail which should hopefully bring us new members.

I am anxious to receive details of corrections to the published diary and one member who wrote was Samuel Fleshman and he said:

"I finished reading 'Bing - A Diary of a Lifetime' and I have one small correction to make. On page 52, October 1948 it states that Bing sang at a benefit at Bellarmine College Preparatory at Santa Clara, California. It should read San Jose. I am very familiar with the area as I lived in San Jose for 42 years. Also, I was present at the benefit and the date was October 10, 1948. It was a Sunday afternoon and after the benefit was over, Bing came outside at around 5 p.m. and a bunch of us were gathered around him in a circle talking to him. Shortly, he decided to leave and he just busted through the circle. I happened to be in his way and he ran right over me and knocked me on my butt and kept going. The incident in no way affected my regard for him or his talent. I thought then and still do that he was the greatest talent in all phases that ever existed."

Thanks, Sam. Quite a honour to be knocked over by Bing. Not many members can claim to have had similar treatment!

As Wig has mentioned, he and I went to the National Archives in Washington D.C. to research Bing's wartime activities for the USO. We came up with some useful information which in turn led me to visit libraries in Denver, Cheyenne and Salt Lake City during my recent holiday. The Wyoming Eagle of August 12th., 1942 carried the following report and as luck would have it, Ron Bosley had a photograph which linked in with it!

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING CROSBY AND SOLDIERS BOTH ENJOY HIS TOUR OF QMRTC HERE

by Pvt. Lester H Geiss

Three good Americans came out of the west to Cheyenne the other day. One of them was a great star. Yesterday they toured Ft. Warren's Quartermaster Replacement Training center seeking nothing except an opportunity to humbly contribute of their considerable talents to the soldiers who had heard their names, seen their images, listened to their voices, yet had never seen them personally.

The three good Americans are Bing Crosby, Phil Silvers, Hollywood actor, and Jimmy Van Heusen, the nation's No. 1 songwriter whose hits are outnumbered only by the number of people who hum them. For three whirlwind hours the trio of cinema citizens hurried around the

replacement center, rubbing shoulders with fatigued soldiers, posing for quartermaster camera fans and signing autographs.

Starting at the motor maintenance school, Bing, Phil and Jimmy, as they are known to the soldiers, visited two of the giant buildings while classes were in session. In one of the buildings, Bing paused to talk with a group of colored soldiers from the fourth regiment. He expressed interest in the drill presses they were operating and listened patiently while they explained the operation of the machines. At the other building, Crooner Crosby continued to mingle with the soldiers and exchange quips with them. His casual, informal manner put the privates at ease and every "hello, Bing" was answered with a "Well, how are you, glad to see you" or some equally friendly greeting.

Traditionally an informal dresser, Crosby was garbed in light grey tropical trousers, a dark blue cotton, high necked polo shirt horizontally striped with white and a dark blue linen jacket. An unlit pipe constantly dangled from his mouth.

Boarding jeeps at the QMRTC motor pool, the visiting Hollywoodians, in the company of several officers, went out to the rifle range where they watched soldiers learn the art of marksmanship, posed for dozens of amateur photographers and pencilled their signatures scores of times.



Bing tries his hand with a rifle at Fort Warren.

Twice on the range Bing met privates he had known in civilian life and both times he made them proud by warmly acknowledging the acquaintanceships. Under the careful mentoring of Lieut.- Col, Virginio Cicarelli, Crosby, Van Heusen and Silvers tried their hands with a rifle. All hit the target.

Cordial Crosby "hellos" also resounded throughout the QMRTC bakery as the singer-actor witnessed students rounding loaves of bread. Bing not only donned a tall, white baker's cap to do some rounding of his own, but congratulated the students on the quality of bread they

were producing as he munched a piece before departing. To the grateful cheers of bath robed patients, at the station hospital annex, Crosby sang a half dozen songs, Silvers entertained with several amusing stories and Van Heusen exhibited unusually fine style at the piano.

From the hospital Bing returned to his hotel room to prepare for his appearance with the USO show which gave two performances at QMRTC theater No. 2 last night to conclude its two-night run here. Soldiers lined up for blocks as they stood in line awaiting admittance.

Approximately \$15,000 in war bonds were sold at the special Bing Crosby KFBC broadcast yesterday morning when eager fans jammed the studio in an effort to get the famous crooner's autograph. The prize for the single largest purchase went to A. V. Tyrell, who invested in two \$1,000 bonds. The prize was a recording by Bing of Tyrell's favorite tune "Conchita Marquita Lolita Pepita Rosita Juanita Lopez".

(Editor: I find these reports of Bing's visits to various places fascinating and what an useful insight they give us into the real man. From our investigations at the National Archives, we know that Bing entertained 1798 forces personnel at his shows in Fort Warren on August 10, 1942 and a further 2720 on August 11. Further details of his 1942 USO trip will appear in the next BING.)

BOOKS 'N' BING

The Red Nichols Story : After Intermission 1942 - 1965

This is the new book jointly compiled by Philip Evans, Stan Hester, Steve Hester and Linda Evans. Nicely bound in a hard cover, it runs to a massive 746 pages and it starts at the point where Red Nichols's Band closes in Daytona, Ohio on April 19, 1942. Red wanted to do something for the war effort and he sold his band and obtained a job as a ship fitter's helper in the ship yard at Oakland, California. Near tragedy struck in June 1943, when Red's daughter, Dorothy, was diagnosed as suffering from infantile paralysis, spinal meningitis and encephalitis. She lapsed into a coma and came close to death before rallying. In fact, Dorothy is still alive and well today. With Dorothy's recovery, Red eventually decided to return to show business, not to lead his own band again, but to act as a sideman in other people's orchestra. After this brief introduction, the book then becomes virtually a diary as it lists the engagements undertaken by Red and interleaved with this chronology are occasional extracts from letters and recollections about the events from others. The dates are linked by narrative where appropriate and the mass of detail assembled is breathtaking. I know how satisfying it is to dig out facts like these and the book is a wonderful record for posterity. The amount of work undertaken to complete this vast bio/discography is almost beyond belief and reflects great credit on the authors.

Red had worked with Bing during his Whiteman days and

they were reunited on July 3, 1945 when Red formed part of Vic Schoen's Orchestra as they supported Bing and the Andrews Sisters at a recording session. In December 1945, Red joined the John Scott Trotter aggregation on the Kraft Music Hall and he worked with them frequently until 1954. Details of all the assignments with Bing, both in the recording studio and on radio broadcasts are given and in fact the dates we quoted for the transcribing of Bing's shows in our own diary of Bing's life came from this book. The book contains the personnel of all of the radio shows from 1945 through 1954, listing the musicians each September (usually when the programme premiered) and again at the midway point (normally January). Each tune is noted on each broadcast and if it was issued on an LP or a CD this is also listed. Red accompanied Bing on many of his recordings during this time and again full personnel are listed. You will judge from this that the book is, of course, primarily a reference book, and I would have liked a little more information about the man himself to flesh out the facts. However such complaints are churlish in the face of what is an incredible piece of work which is an important addition to the Crosby bibliography.

As many of you will recall, Red Nichols's life story was dramatised in the film 'The Five Pennies' (1959) with Danny Kaye playing Red. The filming is described in the book and Steve Hester gives a very helpful comparison between the truth of Red's life and how it was depicted in the film. Red did enjoy further success with his own band but probably not commensurate with the influence he had on the musical scene. Woody Backensto in his foreword to the book says:

"We will never know for certain why this genius never achieved public acclaim equivalent to many sidemen of his band and recordings of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The sidemen who made it big included Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Glenn Miller, and Jack Teagarden; even Louis Prima and Artie Shaw were members of Red's 1932 band for a short time."

Louis Armstrong once said of Red Nichols:

"Let's not forget that man, Daddy. What a tone, what a tone. And he was blowin' it at a time the rest of us cats was tryin' to find our way out of the woods."

The book finishes with the death of Red on June 28, 1965 from a heart seizure in Las Vegas. A comprehensive song title index and a musician and proper name index are both provided and are invaluable. Published in the USA by Scarecrow Press Inc. of 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Maryland 20706, the book can also be obtained in the UK from Shelwing Ltd, 4 Pleydell Gardens, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2DN, (tel. 01303 850501) price £71.55

Malcolm Macfarlane

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries

Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gilles Frereault, 1555 Kirouac St., Laval, Quebec, Canada H7G4T4 (Tel 1-514-669-4305, fax. 1-514-336-3030)

The whole collection assembled over 60 years by the late Jean-Paul Frereault is offered to the highest bidder for a minimum bid of \$7000 U.S. Roger Osterholm, who is familiar with the collection estimates that it is worth \$35,000 or more. A local adjuster estimates the collection at \$50,000 Canadian for insurance purposes. The collection is complete with no part sold off, with virtually every Crosby recording ever made, two pipes used by Bing, a Crosby necktie, many books and periodicals, publications and commemorative bottles from about a dozen Crosby Golf Tournaments and all the movies, radio and TV shows. Make an offer, or send for a full inventory to Gilles Frereault.

Alan G. Woodhall, Tidebrook, Tudor Hollow, Fulford, Staffordshire ST11 9NP (Tel. 01782 395345)

"I have approx 20 original Bing Crosby 78s with John Scott Trotter - some with original sleeves - and in reasonable and recordable condition. Would these be of interest to your members?"

(Editor: I have replied indicating that they may well be and please contact Mr. Woodhall direct.)

Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

RARE BING: For exchange / Sale, V Discs, AFRS, Transcriptions, Philco, KMH, Woodbury, On The Air, Totem, Spokane, Others include Jolson, Garland, Bob Hope. Please send SAE for lists.

OPEN REEL TAPES (WANTED): Old Radio shows, Private recordings of Bing, Al Jolson, original Jazz Bands etc. Does anyone have BUNK JOHNSON / GEORGE LEWIS recordings?

Franc Joyce, 15 Farmhouse Rd., Manor Farm Estate, Short-Heath, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV12 4AU (tel. 01902-632923)

"Offers invited for the following Crosby memorabilia:

30 Sheet Music copies (some American)

Large scrap book (containing cuttings and photos of Bing) Specially issued papers and books paying tribute to Bing after his death in 1977

2 Palladium souvenir programmes for when he appeared there in 1976 and 1977.

2 wartime letters I received from him dated 1943 and 1945 and signed 'Bing'.

2 portrait drawings (in charcoal and graphite)

100+ 78 rpm records (in good condition)

2 invitation tickets from when Bing appeared on the Parkinson show and 'The Bing Crosby Show' at Wembley television studio. The former has Bing's autograph, plus his 2 sons' signatures."

E.A.S. Newhouse, 15 Gaskell Close, Holybourne, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4HE (Tel 01420 88309)

"I, a fan of Bing since 1932, have 200 78 rpm records to sell. They are in good condition and are of great memory. Coupled with that I have many LPs - still to count. I have to sell because, being 75, when I and my dear wife pass away, I do not want them to go into the rubbish bin! I welcome offers per record and I will consider delivering them personally in some record cases, in my car of course."

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA (Tel. 01708-445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please, which now include a fairish copy of 'High Tor'.

Brian Jones, 1 Gellihaf Rd., Fleur De Lis, Blackwood, Gwent NP2 1RJ

WANTED:- (a) The book 'My Life with Bing' by Kathryn Crosby. (b) Gramophone record catalogues with Bing's records in - or without him.

Mr. J. Ellis, 7 Beecroft Close, Bramley, Leeds 13 3ET

"I have between eighty or ninety Bing Crosby 78s and wonder if anyone in your society would be interested in purchasing this collection?"

(Editor: Please contact Mr. Ellis direct)

Ken Merry, 28 The Avenue, Bessacarr, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5JX

ON CASSETTES: Some British anniversary tributes from 1980 onwards of Bing with many records played. ALSO some less usual and less obvious Bing collections. Each cassette £3.50 plus postage.

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby Clubs. Please write to the addresses shown for further details.

Club Crosby, BINGANG

Wayne L. Martin, Editor

435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA

(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)

(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Mailcrosby@aol.com)

The Queensland Bing Crosby Society,

John Wright, 17 Thurecht Parade, Scarborough, Queensland 4020, Australia

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU

This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis. The magazine includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £10 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13

Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN
Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland,
SR1 1PN

The International Petula Clark Society, c/o Terry Young,
38 Elmley Way, Margate, Kent CT9 4ES

Alma Cogan Appreciation Society, c/o Stephen Woods, 9
Canterbury Avenue, Bowerham, Lancaster LA1 4AU

The Sammy Davis Jr Association, c/o Paul Iacovou, 6
Thyra Grove, North Finchley, London N12 8HB

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside,
Cumbria LA22 9DX

The Judy Garland Club c/o Anthony R. Scarrott, Flat 3, 25
Holland Rd., Hove, East Sussex BN3 1JF

The Al Jolson Society, c/o Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield,
Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o
Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North
Yorkshire YO12 4HY

International Friends of Gordon Macrae, c/o Mrs. Pat
Robinson, 47 Lea Mill Park Drive, Yeaden, Leeds LS19 7YH

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East
Sussex TN22 1ZR

Guy Mitchell Appreciation Society, 11 Kierhill Rd., Balloch,
Cumbernauld, Glasgow G68 9BH

JEAN-PAUL FRERECAULT DIES

We were very sorry to learn (belatedly) of the death of Jean-Paul from Laval, in Quebec, Canada last December. His close friend, Jean-Paul Gagnon advised us and commented:

"He was a very generous man and he would help anyone anytime. You could ask him what year any record was made, who sang with Bing, the orchestra and the composer, and he would tell you right away. He had made a special cardex to refer to."

I had never met him but I felt that I knew him through our correspondence and his own very generous help to me. He sent me many press clippings of Bing and he made a major contribution to our listings of Bing's TV shows which we published in BING some years ago. He gave similar help to BINGANG magazine too and we shall all miss his enthusiastic help. In an earlier edition of BING we published several photographs of the expositions which Jean-Paul frequently undertook at shopping centres and where he displayed rare items from his huge collection. He had converted his basement at this home into a Crosby store.

Jean-Paul started out as a singer himself but he decided that his future lay elsewhere and he worked at Canadair. He corresponded with Bing over the years and the two met for the first time when Bing performed in Montreal in 1976. After Bing's death, the Crosby family gave Jean-Paul two of Bing's neckties.

Jean-Paul leaves his wife of over 50 years, Rachel, two sons, two daughters, two brothers, one sister, ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. We send our condolences to his family. (Please see Trading Post

for information about the proposed sale of his collection.)

Malcolm Macfarlane

OLD GOLD PRESENTS PAUL WHITEMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

Between February 1929 and May 1930, Paul Whiteman broadcast 66 radio shows which were sponsored by Old Gold. Bing appeared on many of these and most of information we have about them was drawn from the book 'Bix - Man and Legend' by Richard M. Sudhalter and Philip R. Evans. In turn the authors' information was taken from a man called Warren W. Scholl who wrote down the details of the shows as he listened to them. Out of the blue, we recently received a mass of new data about the shows from Scott Whalen of Columbus, Ohio and Lionel Pairpoint has been busily amalgamating this with the details he already held. It is intended to publish a detailed radio directory in due course. Scott Whalen has a few thoughts about the significance of the Old Gold series which we have encouraged him to now share with us.

Within the broader scope of things the information uncovered by all of us concerning this radio program should appease the curiosity of anyone with an avid interest in the radio of yesterday. It never ceases to amaze me (in this day and age when everything, both public and private, broadcast or not, is recorded and documented ad nauseam) that so much of what passed for broadcast entertainment 50 or 60 years ago is "known" but virtually unknown. When I first discovered the Old Gold listings I photocopied them because I figured that it would be slightly easier than searching for a book that might contain them. I had read a biography of Paul Whiteman and I was puzzled that it did not contain the radio logs of this show, but I figured that the author simply glossed over what was, after all, a blip in the career of Whiteman. Then I acquired a copy of Morgereth's book on Crosby and I noticed that his Old Gold listings were different than mine. I wrote to Wig asking him about this and I mentioned that I had the photocopies of the Old Gold show and wondered if he would be interested in them. He wrote back and enthusiastically said, "Yes!" And that was that.

I find it rather curious that those of us who enjoy listening to the music of Bing Crosby seem either disinterested or oblivious of the work he did with Whiteman's orchestra. Certainly Crosby improved with age - his voice alone bears that out, but in my opinion his vocalising with the Whiteman band has a certain period charm that slowly fades as he gets older. This may just be my fascination with the Jazz Age but I don't think so. Once Bing reached the level where he was in control of what he sang and how he sang it I think he toned down that Jazz Age edge he displayed when he was part of Whiteman's elite - which would only be natural as the Jazz Age ended and people's tastes changed. Evidence the fantastic playing of a young

Benny Goodman with Ben Pollack or Red Nichols contrasted with his later playing during the Swing era. In a scant ten years he went from a rough and jazzy kid who played hot licks to the King of Swing who sounds far too commercial and less demanding. Like Crosby, both periods and styles are unique and entirely different animals, but one would not exist without the other.

Crosby's tenure with Whiteman enveloped his vocal style and trained him for the greater and richer tonality he went on to. The musicians he performed with added immensely to his performance. He may not have commanded the songs he sang on, but after Bix and Tram and Chet Hazlett do their part, Crosby all but shines doing his. The same can be said of Goodman. Bix and Teagarden and Miller each shine for a brief moment and then Benny comes on like gangbusters and plays his short solo. Later, when he was in command of his own band and became the spotlight, his playing was more relaxed. He didn't have as much to prove because he was it. And I think the same thing happened with Bing. Of course, I am comparing apples with oranges here - and with great hindsight at that! Crosby or Goodman could not have known in 1927 that thirteen years later they would be who they were. But we know and in that knowledge we can make the crummy comparisons between the two individual styles and sounds that I have made here.

The Whiteman period was Crosby's starting point - perhaps even his learning ground (although I don't for a second think that Crosby wouldn't have become who he became if he hadn't been hired by Whiteman) and in that I think the Old Gold shows are somewhat important in deciphering his growth as a legend. When listening to Bing singing with the Rhythm Boys I don't believe that anyone is truly intent on hearing Rinker or Barris anyway. The listener's attention is focused completely on Crosby, even if his voice is drowned out by the goofy Barris or the nasally Rinker. In fact, when listening to the Rhythm Boys version of "From Monday On" I am horrified! The Whiteman version prominently features Bing. The other seems to prominently feature Barris and that is not such a good thing. Perhaps this is why many Crosby fans ignore the Whiteman period. When Bing became BING you got all you wanted. When he was a Rhythm Boy you sometimes had to listen to what at times can be virtually unlistenable. But aside from that it is interesting to hear Bing before he captured the public's acclaim in its fullest.

In a modern example, the Whiteman period with Bing would be akin to listening to Sting when he was part of a group called Strontium 90. The musical ability is there, but his sound and style is "different." The version of Sting that exists today can be glimpsed in that earlier form, but it somehow seems diluted and capable of emerging into an entirely different persona, musically. The growth and maturation that enabled Bing or Sting or Benny Goodman to become who they did rests somewhat on those beginnings. Money and fame enable the least talented to release acclaimed garbage that is gobbled up by a voracious society (just watch American television sometime). Luckily Bing seems to have not allowed his popularity to water down his musical greatness. Later in

life he just seems to reflect the styles of each period he is performing within and that, to me, only serves to highlight the vast difference of his days with Whiteman. I could be wrong.

Scott Whalen

(Editor: Some fascinating ideas from Scott and I look forward to members' comments.)

BING'S HILLSBOROUGH HOME

We mentioned in the last edition of BING about Bing's house at Hillsborough being open to the public during parts of April and May. It was the 1998 Decorators' Show House and each year this type of event raises thousands of dollars for the Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education in San Mateo, California. Kathryn Crosby is friendly with one of the Coyote point auxiliary members, and she had convinced her that since she would be away for an extended period of time appearing in three plays in Moscow, the house could be put to good, charitable use. Forty of the top local designers elegantly decorated and furnished the house and close to 40,000 visitors are thought to have toured the property.

First of all, let's remember how Bing came to be living there and as background I am reproducing below part of a major article from the San Francisco Chronicle of April 22, 1998.

HOME IMPROVEMENT WITH THE GLOBE-TROTTERING CROSBYS

In 1964, Kathryn Crosby resigned herself to leaving Los Angeles and moved reluctantly to Hillsborough. In search of privacy for his second family with three young children, Bing Crosby had insisted on leaving the Hollywood scene.

In her autobiography, "My Life With Bing," Crosby playfully writes about herself. "In the depths of her little black soul she had never really given up her secret plan to become the queen of the silver screen. She had hidden it from a husband who wanted a homebody, from a world which would simply have laughed, and even from herself in a mad confusion of nursing, babies, and travel, but now she had to face the fact that she was leaving the tinsel of Movietown forever."

Crosby had sent his wife north on several occasions to find the proper new family home, but hoping to put off the eventual move, she never came back with any recommendations. So, finally, he came north and found a house himself. "My worst fears were realized when I flew to Hillsborough to view the new house," she writes. "It combined the most deplorable characteristics of the last 10 we had seen. To begin with, it was dark, dank, absurdly proportioned and totally ill-suited to our needs." With her usual pluck, Kathryn Crosby named it her challenge and

worked to make the place liveable. But later that year, the famous crooner presented her with a lovely surprise, another new home that is now the Crosby Estate. Crosby shared a passion for horse racing with the former owner of the estate, Lindsay Howard, and had visited there in earlier years. By the time Bing Crosby was ready to move north, the home had seen several owners.

The Crosbys actually owned several homes -- a ranch in Nevada, a desert home in Palm Springs, and a hacienda in Las Cruces, Mexico, to name a few. In fact, Bing Crosby was known to buy property on a whim, then give his wife the responsibility of furnishing it. She was often overwhelmed by the task. So when her husband said they were going to see yet another home, she countered, "But I haven't even unpacked the lamp shades yet!" and reluctantly agreed to go. Prepared to dislike it immediately, she was startled. "The house looked like something out of my private childhood fantasies. The white bricks of the outer walls had a bit of rose peering through the paint. Enormous French doors were shaded by cypress, pine, oak and eucalyptus trees, which still admitted oceans of brilliant light. Queen Elizabeth tree roses nestled against columns on the terrace, and acres of lawn swept away into parklike forest."

Enchanted with the place, she demanded they buy it. "Bing's eyes twinkled," she writes. "Actually I'm pleased that you feel that way. It would be cause for divorce if you didn't." Kathryn Crosby devoted her time to transforming the place into "our final and definitive home. We both

loved beautiful and old things, and were as happy as children selecting them and deciding where they would fit in our houses," she writes. On trips abroad, the Crosbys brought back treasures for their new home.

Bing Crosby had often been a guest at William Randolph Hearst's castle and had spent many evenings discussing what was beautiful and important with Hearst. On a recent tour of her estate, she explained, "Mr. Hearst collected rooms like people collect baseball cards. He would purchase entire rooms from European homes and castles, and preserve them in his New York warehouse." It was there the Crosbys went to find the grand wooden staircase, panelling and furnishings for their new home. Kathryn Crosby had come to realize that Bing loved living in a formal home. "He delighted in dusting his pipe tobacco all over the rug of a perfectly furnished library. The chairs over which he draped his raincoats and hunting jackets had to be delicate antiques, and the bedspreads upon which the Labradors lolled must be museum pieces."

Kathryn Crosby is returning from the Russian stage to attend the wedding of her daughter, Mary Frances, in Los Angeles and the opening of her home as a show house in Hillsborough. She will be one of the first of as many as 40,000 visitors to view the Crosby home improvements.

(Editor: Our thanks to the San Francisco Chronicle. Charles Baillie was one of the first to tell me about his visit to the house. Very generously, he sent me the



The Crosby Home

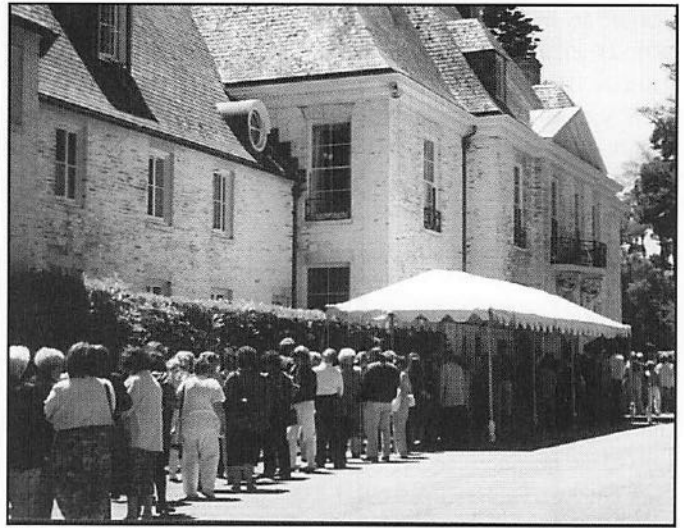
April / May edition of the 'Gentry' magazine which extensively featured the house plus souvenir postcards he had purchased there. A detailed account on cassette followed and I learned that Charles had visited the property as part of a party put together by Hobie and Cathie Wilson of the Bing's Friends and Collectors Society. Roger Osterholm next wrote to me telling of his visit and newspaper cuttings came in from several sources including Les Wilson. How to record all of this information in a concise form for members was my challenge and I was rescued by none other than Priscilla Koernig, a past President of the Club Crosby who wrote a description of her involvement with the house. We are indeed honoured to have Priscilla returning to our pages after what must be 20 years or more.)

ON THE 'ROAD' TO BING'S HOUSE

It was mostly pleasant weather from April 26, 1998, and got even nicer through May 24th (the month that the Crosby home was open for the annual Decorator's Show House to benefit the Coyote Point Museum). It seems that El Nino is finally over!

Bing's decision to move to the Bay area in 1964 was a tremendous treat for me. As you know from my previous articles, living only five miles from him blessed me with many wonderful opportunities. This past month has renewed the "closeness" and has brought back many "beautiful memories", plus it helped me through a very difficult time in my life, as my precious dog, Katrina, who I had for over seventeen years, died. I was able to volunteer to be an "angel" (that's what they called those of us who helped guide people through the estate). Even though I was originally assigned to different rooms in the home, they chose to put me in either Bing's Study, Dressing Room or a sitting room since I was the only volunteer who, like most of us club members, has a "built in encyclopaedia" in her head about Bing.

I was on duty nine days and toured the house with friends two other days. It was quite an experience being able to meet people with different reasons for touring the Estate. I believe 80% of the people were there because they are admirers of Bing, approximately 5% were curious and 15% were actually interested in the decorating aspect. I met people who had seen Bing walking around the neighbourhood, walking and shopping for groceries, etc. on nearby Burlingame Avenue (Burlingame, Ca.). There was a lady who worked at Gonzaga University. I met those whose children or grandchildren had taken ballet lessons with Mary Frances, or as children had played with Harry or Nathaniel at their home. Kathryn, Harry and Nathaniel visited the house during the show, but I didn't see them. I was told that they all liked the way it was decorated. Evidently Kathryn said that Bing would have liked it, except he wouldn't have approved of so many pictures of him around the house. She mentioned that he used to throw his raincoat on the sofa and would put his feet up on the coffee tables!



*The crowds wait patiently to enter the Crosby home.
(Photo courtesy of Roger Osterholm)*

The piano from "High Society" is still in the living room. There are monogrammed towel sets in his bathroom and a small Madonna shrine and prie-Dieu in his bedroom. There are pipes and hats in his study and dressing room. There are suits, the army uniform he wore in "White Christmas", the fur coat from "Road to Utopia" among other wardrobes in his dressing room. In the library there are bound scripts of "White Christmas" and "Mr. Music" plus Bing's western painting collection. The study has Bing's dual desk with scripts from "High Society" and a Crosby Christmas Show with Fred Astaire. And, of course, the Oscar is there along with Look Magazine and Photoplay Magazine Awards, awards from thoroughbred horse racing, Lakeside Country Club awards from the 30's, National Broadcasting Hall of Fame award, gold and platinum records and pictures of family and friends throughout the house. In the smoke room there are mementoes of the various presidents Bing knew and a portrait by Barnaby Conrad of Bing and one of his Labradors.



Here are a few excerpts from the information cards provided for 'Angel' staff:

The Living Room

In the Living Room we have attempted to respect and enhance the early Georgian period panelling (keeping in mind its context in an otherwise French-style residence), honour its famous resident through the display--of some personal effects, and at the same time make a very formal room suitable for everyday informal use. To make the large scale of the room more manageable we have divided it into three sitting areas; a central furniture grouping around the fireplace, a music area featuring the High Society piano, and an area for games or conversation.

Bing's Study

The success of any room is the marriage of harmony and balance through colour, textures and proper placement of furnishings. Bing's study, filled with its treasured pieces of furnishings and memorabilia, has been preserved in its original state. The goal was to enhance the integrity of the room by refreshing and reviving it to the ambience that was present 30 to 35 years ago. It is obvious that personal taste and a lot of warmth and care were present when this room was created for Bing's enjoyment. The historic wood panelling, once part of the William Randolph Hearst Collection has been cleaned, treated and buffed with loving care. The room, having a strong masculine character was softened by the designer's selections and placements of accent accessories. In Bing's study, numerous awards, trophies, photos, press clippings and, of course, his "Oscar" are displayed. The trophies were polished and returned to their 1930's and 40's condition. Here in this room you will discover more about Bing and his other interests. There are trophies for his love of golf, numerous pieces recognising his generosity to organisations as well as his alma mater, Gonzaga University. But Bing had another interest, and this was his passion for thoroughbred horse racing. He owned and co-owned many champions of the race course. Bing's study when completed and restored to its beginning, in the mid 60's, will invite the viewing guest to a bit of nostalgia that

will also help us remember the man who gave so much entertainment and enjoyment to the world. Sofa, Chair and Bing's Desk are antique period pieces. Octagonal table, like the wood panelling is from the Hearst Collection (originating from a European castle). The "Oscar" is from 1944: Best Actor in 'Going My Way'. It has been refurbished by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science. Framed art, "Bing" on horse is from his working ranch in Elko, Nevada.

Master Bedroom

Existing Furnishings: Madonna fragment over mantel - 16th C.; Madonna on top of mantel - Italian 19th C. Pair of painted chairs in dressing room were upholstered by Mrs. Crosby. The altar on mantel and kneeling bench have been left untouched by designer. Mrs. Crosby's gowns by Jean Louis - Beige gown was worn at Ronald Reagan's inauguration ball.

There has been a void in my life since Bing's death and part of that feeling will always be there. But being able to be in Bing's home for so many hours brought back wonderful memories and has renewed the closeness with the many friends I would not have known if it hadn't been for Bing. It has given me the incentive to become more active again with my Crosby friends.

Priscilla J. Koernig

(Editor: I'm delighted to read that Priscilla will be becoming more active on the Crosby scene again and we look forward to further contributions to the magazine in the future. One of Bing's other former homes has also been in the news as what was his estate in Rancho Santa Fe has been put on the market at \$7.5 million. The press coverage mentioned that there is a potent reminder of Bing in the pump house there. Apparently he inscribed his name and the year (1939) in the cement floor.)

Bing in a final moment

Crooner Crosby visited Preston in 1977, where he magnetised a massive Guild Hall audience, singing many of his old songs with his young wife Kathy. Three weeks later came news of his sud-



den death at 75 in Madrid where he collapsed while playing golf. Radio made Crosby famous as a crooner in 1934. He

later blossomed into Hollywood films. More than 20 of his records sold a million copies. ■ He is seen in Preston with, from the

left, his wife Kathy, Vin Sumner (Guild Hall chief), Mayor of Preston Coun Joe Hood and Mayoress Mrs Enid Hood.

Thanks to Ronnie West for submitting this press cutting



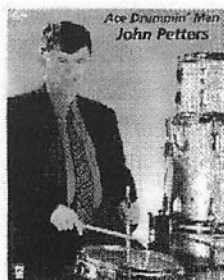
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KEITH PARKINSON'S CELLULOID CROSBY

The death of Frank Sinatra in May of this year prompts a look at the second Bing/Frank musical, *Robin and the 7 Hoods*. Their first big screen collaboration of any significance was *High Society*, the subject of "Celluloid Crosby" in last winter's issue of BING.

Sinatra had established his own film production company and used Warner Bros. to distribute his movies. That company would eventually buy his recently formed Reprise record label. Sinatra exercised his personal preferences in deciding the subjects he should film, the actors he would use, the songs he would record and the vocalists with whom he would collaborate on special projects. The Reprise Repertory Theatre was a recording venture which allowed him to preserve four of his favourite American musicals: "South Pacific", "Finian's Rainbow", "Guys and Dolls" and "Kiss Me Kate". Bing contributed to three of the albums, missing out on the latter. Those recordings were made during the summer of 1963, some weeks before starting work on *Robin* in October.

The press liked to refer to Sinatra and his show business colleagues as the Rat Pack, although Bing was never regarded as being part of that group. There were four Rat Pack films in the early part of the 1960s. The first one, *Ocean's Eleven* (1960) was financially successful and Sinatra's company went on to produce one each year. He wanted the film's to have some sort of linking identity and decided that a number in the title would set them apart from his other cinematic ventures. *Sergeants 3* came out in 1962, followed by *4 for Texas* and then *Robin and the 7 Hoods*. None of these films pretended to be anything other than light-hearted diversions and watching them you get the impression that the actors were enjoying interacting with each other as well as acting for the camera. One reviewer commented: "If Warner Bros. *Robin and the 7 Hoods* had been as amusing an experience for audiences as it patently was for the cast, it would have broken box-office records".

Bing had not been cast in the first three films of the Sinatra clan and he was not the first choice for Allen A. Dale in *Robin*. Fred Reynolds in his book "The Road to Hollywood" tells us that it was the cancellation of the film *The Devil's Advocate* that freed Bing to appear in *Robin*. Bing's selection was made possible because Sinatra had fallen out with Rat Pack regular Peter Lawford. Lawford had appeared in *Oceans Eleven* and *Sergeants 3*. He was also the man who smoothed the way for Sinatra's friendship with the Kennedy's. Lawford was JFK's brother-in law following marriage to Patricia. When Sinatra vetoed Lawford playing Allen A. Dale he selected Crosby as the replacement. Because the part had been tailored to suit Lawford it wasn't possible for Bing to take on the role

without a substantial re-write. As originally written, Allen A. Dale was a flashy well dressed mouthpiece. Probably not unlike Lawford in real life. The adapted version of Allen A. Dale suited Bing in all respects. The dialogue might have been written by Carroll Carroll from the Kraft radio days, so well did it match the public Crosby persona. This casting switch brought about an unexpected delight. Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen were inspired by this character change to write the song "Style". The two other Cahn - Van Heusen songs which Crosby tackled were likewise well suited to his less serious vocal style. Both "Mister Booze" and "Don't be a do Badder" also nicely advanced the plot of the picture. Sinatra selected "My Kind of Town" for his own use and it received an Academy Award nomination.



Bing urges his audience to 'Don't be a do-badder'

Sinatra's influence on the film's musical content extended to the conducting of the film's score. The task was assigned to Sinatra's long-time collaborator / arranger Nelson Riddle. Sinatra had previously put his weight behind Riddle's cinematic employment by having him assigned to that earlier Bing-Frank musical *High Society* (1956). I have never rated Riddle's work with Bing on record. They worked together twice on what I consider to be near disasters. In 1957 Riddle conducted the orchestra on one of Bing's worst ever single releases, "Seven Nights a Week" and "Man on Fire". Then, surrounding the filming of *Robin*, they made their only album, "Return to Paradise Islands". This totally ignored the traditional Hawaiian arrangements suitable for the songs selected for Bing's return to a musical genre he loved. Worst still, the recording engineer was operating under the mistaken

belief that the resulting album would be bought for Riddle's orchestrations and gave the band unwarranted prominence on the final mix.

Another second choice associated with the film was director Gordon Douglas. Gene Kelly was originally selected and a meeting was called to discuss the film's script and the general treatment of the film. Sinatra didn't show at that meeting and the project was passed to Douglas. Knowing Sinatra's impatient, undisciplined behaviour on a film set, it isn't hard to guess why easy-going Douglas was given the assignment. It was so that Sinatra could direct the director. Sinatra liked to do one take and then move on to the next. In the mid-fifties he started filming "Carousel". When the production was underway it was decided that a CinemaScope 55 version would be shot simultaneously. Sinatra refused to double up on his acting/singing chores. As a result he was replaced by Gordon MacRae. Gordon Douglas was Sinatra's kind of director. He went along with Sinatra's one take philosophy. Most directors like to cover themselves with several takes. Douglas could be persuaded to see things Sinatra's way. One usable take and then on to the next set up. This actor-director relationship explains why Sinatra hired Douglas to shoot three subsequent films: *Tony Rome* (1967), *The Detective* (1968) and *Lady in Cement* (1968). In addition Douglas worked on Bing's last "proper" film - *Stagecoach* (1966).

On screen the impression of everyone having a good time was as much in evidence as on other films by the Sinatra Clan. Sinatra worked well with Dean Martin and Sammy

Davis, Jr. They were part of his social life as well as on stage colleagues for his hugely popular night club act in the first half of the 1960s. It says much for the professionalism of the actors that viewers of *Robin* don't sense the impact of two major traumas that must have been felt on the shooting stages. Midway through filming, President Kennedy was assassinated. A friendship existed between the politician and the entertainer. In addition, Sinatra had to contend with the kidnapping and subsequent ransom demand in respect of Frank junior. Sceptics labelled this as a publicity stunt but it was the sort of publicity the family could do without and caused a great deal of anguish to the extended Sinatra family.

Film fans will recognise some familiar faces in the cast. Several fall into the category of "look - isn't that what's-his-name?" Sinatra gave work to several well seasoned character actors. The studio system had collapsed by the early 1960s and the bit part players of earlier decades had been jettisoned from the studio payrolls. The likes of Allen Jenkins, Sig Ruman and Hans Conreid must have been well pleased to find their careers marginally extended. Edward G. Robinson turns up at the beginning of the story only to be bumped off in the first reel. Peter Falk is in one of his meatier roles to date as Guy Gisborne. Of course, Falk went on to play the television detective Columbo when Bing turned the part down on the grounds that it would interfere with his golfing schedules. And Bing's son Philip is given one line in the picture in the part of a hood who gives dad a chair and tells him to sit down.

It was not until the following April that the cast re-



Bing as Allen A Dale convinces the hoods that there is something wrong with his throat!

assembled to record the "soundtrack" album for Reprise Records. Bing had already taken part in the recording of another Reprise album in February of 1964. Called "America, I Hear You Singing", it was not released in the UK because Pye Records, who distributed the Reprise catalogue in this country, doubted its appeal outside of the U. S. A.

At the end of November, 1963, Alma Cogan visited the set and met Bing, Sinatra and Sammy Davis. She was in Los Angeles attending a dinner hosted in her honour by Judy Garland. A further Cogan-Crosby connection occurred six months later when both appeared on the same record album. In the spring of 1964 Bing recorded a spoken introduction which eventually opened the album "A Tribute to Michael Holliday" (33SX1635). Norrie Paramor had assembled several Columbia artistes for the live album of the April, 1964 concert given at London's Prince of Wales theatre. Cogan's performance of "Hava Nagila" is featured on the disc.

I was working in Birmingham when the film went on general release. I had seen it at the end of July, 1964 at the Regal (ABC) in Southport because that cinema played films on pre-release to cater to holiday makers. It deserved a second viewing and that opportunity came a couple of months later in Birmingham. I saw it then at the ABC in Coleshill Street. Just as at Southport, I had to sit through *The Bugs Bunny Show*, a collection of old Warner Bros. cartoons stitched together with new linking cartoon footage. *Robin* was the last film to be shown before the ABC, Coleshill Street installed 70mm projectors and stereo sound. When *Robin* came to the end of its one week presentation on Saturday, October 10th, it has been playing to near capacity audiences all week. On the closing Saturday night there were even three rows of spectators standing and an audience of 1,600 was packed

into a building with an official seating capacity of 1,487. The only way to view *Robin and the 7 Hoods* is on a cinema screen. When ITV bought it for television presentation, it was treated shamefully. At that time films were not shown on television until five years after their initial cinema presentation. I spent Christmas in Granadaland in 1969, where *Robin* was scheduled for screening over the holiday period. To fit the allotted time slot two songs were cut and the film was also screened without being "panned and scanned". This is the process used for a film shot in widescreen format when it is shown on television. In the case of *Robin* the centre of the Panavision frame was all the viewer saw, irrespective of where the action was taking place. The normal pan and scan treatment required a transfer to tape of the most relevant section of the image before transmission. Nowadays, it is just as likely to find a film transmitted in letterbox format, where the full widescreen picture is seen with black bands at the top and bottom of the television screen.

Although audiences generally enjoyed the picture, the critics were not quite as keen. "Halliwell's Film Guide" summed it up with the sentence, "Too flabby by far to be as funny as it thinks it is, this farrago of cheerful jokes has effective moments and lively routines, but most of them are nearly swamped by flat treatment and the wide screen". Bing was mildly enthusiastic. "I just took the part for a lark", he said sometime later. "I thought this will be fun working with these guys - we'll have a lot of laughs. It was a good part with some good songs." At the time he must have suspected that not only were the days of Hollywood musicals numbered but his personal contribution to the genre was nearing its end. As it turned out, *Robin and the 7 Hoods* was his musical swansong.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

It is more than co-incidence that the beginning of the letter "I" sequence of this A-Z of Bings films is dominated by 21 songs out of a total of 22 entries. The only non-song in this listing is itself a film titled after a ballad Bing performs in the picture. Quite simply, Bing was able to express his feelings in song at crucial parts in the plot. Not only was the story advanced, but a tailor-made song was worth a good five minutes of plot exposition. And hadn't the audience visited the cinema so to see him sing rather than act anyway?

I WISH I WERE ALADDIN Song. Featured in the Paramount Picture **Two for Tonight** (1935). Bing sings it to Joan Bennett when she visits him in prison. Like the other songs in the film it was written by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel.

I WISHED ON THE MOON Song. This is the only Bing song in the Paramount Picture **The Big Broadcast of 1936** (1935), the film which immediately

followed **Two for Tonight**. Like a lot of the other songs used in the movie it was simply dropped into the plot for no apparent reason. Bing delivers the song walking from a log cabin to the edge of a lake in an attractive but obvious studio built setting. The music was written by regular Crosby composer Ralph Rainger but the words were the work of the scathingly witty Dorothy Parker. *I Wished on the Moon* became something of a standard taken up by jazz tinged vocalists like Mel Torme, June Christy and Billie Holiday, all of whom did it justice. That is more than can be said for the commercial recording Bing made for Decca about the time he filmed his four minute contribution to *The B.B. of 1936*. He recorded one vocal chorus for what was nothing other than a dance band recording by the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. The underlying reason for not punching his weight with the song in the recording studio was an apparent dislike for the song publisher's representative.

I WONDER WHO'S KISSING HER NOW Song. A ballad totally suited to the Crosby style but only available on the soundtrack of **The Starmaker**



Bing wishes he was Aladdin

(1939) save for a couple of radio performances. In the film it is used in a sequence where children are being auditioned for Bing's troupe of young performers. One young lady is too shy to perform so Bing sings the song to encourage her. Written by Will M. Hough, Frank R. Adams and Joseph E. Howard it became a major hit for Perry Como in 1947.

ICHABOD Song. A bouncy ditty sung by Bing on the soundtrack of the Disney full length cartoon **The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad** (1949). Like all the songs from the Ichabod segment of the film it was written by Don Raye and Gene de Paul. There are two Decca recordings which Crosby made of the song. A full length version was made in December of 1947, to be followed eighteen months later by the song's inclusion on the first of four 78 sides designed to tell the story of the film as a tie-in with the film's October, 1949 release.

I'D CLIMB THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN Song. Introduced by Bing in the 1931 Mack Sennett short **One More Chance** it was brought to the attention of moviegoers fifteen years later when it was one of the musical excerpts utilised in the compilation picture **Road to Hollywood**. The song is appropriately placed near the end of the Sennett short when Bing is in a car together with his wife and father-in-law. The car is being towed up a mountain at the time. In true Sennett tradition the car ends up in a river after running out of control. The song is the only Crosby film song from the collaborating Lew Brown and Sidney Clare. It is good example of a song seemingly tailor-made for the Crosby treatment which did not benefit from a studio recording.

I'D RATHER BE ME Song. Three people collaborated on this rather ordinary ballad which Bing's voice delivered in **Out of this World** (1945). The writers were Sam Coslow, Felix Bernard and Eddie Cherkose and they had to provide a song which expressed the wish of telegram messenger Eddie Bracken to be an ordinary guy and not a singing idol. Frank Sinatra was the singing sensation on whom the character was modelled and Crosby provided the voice which added credibility to Bracken's performance.

I'D RATHER SEE A MINSTREL SHOW Song. Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney join Bing in singing this Irving Berlin composition in the 1954 film **White Christmas**. It is used in a sequence where the trio are rehearsing in order to stage a show destined to make Major General Waverly's (Dean Jagger) Vermont inn a success during a winter bereft of snow. The Decca recording made to capitalise on the film's release saw the song utilised in a medley featuring Bing and Danny Kaye. Rosemary Clooney was contracted to Columbia records and unable to take part in the session.

IF I HAD MY WAY Film. Made between February and April of 1940 this second film Bing made for Universal Pictures was in the cinemas within a month of production ceasing. Crosby had a financial stake in the picture and there was no good reason to wait too long for a return on his investment. Directorial and musical talents from the earlier Universal outing - **East Side of Heaven** - were utilised by Bing. Director David Butler worked well with Crosby and went on to direct **Road to Morocco**

(1942). Song writers Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco knew just what made Bing comfortable when love songs were called for and came up with a quartet of good songs (but not the title song). The choice of leading lady was the young Gloria Jean. At fourteen she was seen by the studio as a successor to Deanna Durbin. Two duets with Bing and one solo vocal outing in the film proved she had the singing talent if not the special appeal of Miss Durbin. The plot was as silly-sentimental as they came at this time. Bing played a construction worker trying to help orphan Gloria Jean. Gloria's uncle is the rich but miserable Allyn Joslyn. He won't help but great uncle Charles Winninger is willing if broke. Help comes in the form of Winninger's vaudevillian friends giving their services free and Bing and buddy El Brendel putting on a show which indirectly leads to a happy ending as Joslyn relents. Audiences had the added bonus of seeing old timer Eddie Leonard performing his hit song *Ida, sweet as apple cider* when the film played cinemas. However the print which was made available to the BBC for television screening was shorn of this historical moment.

IF I HAD MY WAY Song. The title song from the film was written in 1913 by the team of Lou Klein and James Kendis. Yet it seems a typical Crosby ballad which fits the film's action when Bing serenades Gloria Jean having told her he is leaving town. When you think about it, the film's title had nothing to do with the plot. Put another way, there are a dozen Crosby films which could have been called *If I had my way* without audiences storming the box-office claiming they had been misled by an inappropriately named movie. So was the film so

called because the song had a suitable attention grabbing title? Possibly. Bing made his recording for Decca almost a year before the film went before the cameras.

IF I WAS A MILLIONAIRE Song. Another oldie given a new lease of life by being featured in a Crosby movie. The film was **The Star Maker** (1939). The story was loosely based on the life of Gus Edwards, the song's co-composer along with Will D. Cobb. The song surfaces towards the beginning of the film when Bing is rehearsing a bunch of kids with a view to turning them into a vaudeville act. If we ignore the fact that the song was written some thirty years before Bing gave it a whirl it would be easy to believe that it was precisely honed to suit his easy-going ballad style of the time. Decca had Bing record it with a further three Gus Edwards' compositions for a medley issued in 78 form under the overall title *Medley of Gus Edwards song hits*.

IF YOU PLEASE Song. This one was written specifically for Bing by his regular film songwriters of the time Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen. It was one of two strong ballads composed by the team for **Dixie** (1943). (The other one was *Sunday, Monday or Always*). In the film it was the song Bing sang to Marjorie Reynolds that led her to suggest that his compositions were good enough to be published.

IF YOU STUB YOUR TOE ON THE MOON Song. Another one from the shared pen of Burke and Van Heusen. It was written for the film **A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court** (1949). It provides a fine musical start to the film's early flashback



Bing and the kids sing 'If I Was a Millionaire'

to 1905. It allows Bing the blacksmith to pass on some philosophical advice to a group of youngsters observing him at work. The kids are quick learners and join in as the song progresses.

I'LL CAPTURE YOUR HEART Song. Although Irving Berlin did not primarily write songs to order for film actors this one was composed especially for the film **Holiday Inn** (1942). He couldn't go wrong in racking up royalties once the song benefitted from double exposure from Bing and Fred Astaire assisted by Virginia Dale. It is the ballad which opens the picture when the trio perform a nightclub routine. When the film's plot reaches its happy ending, the song is used in the finale with the addition of a vocal from Marjorie Reynolds (voiced by Martha Mears).

I'LL SEE YOU IN CUBA Song. Another Irving Berlin composition, this time composed a quarter of a century before it was featured in the Crosby musical **Blue Skies** (1946). It started life in the Broadway show **The Ziegfeld Midnight Frolics** and it is utilised in the film without being an integral part of the plot. Bing and Olga San Juan duet the song in the Paramount picture.

I'LL SI-SI YA IN BAHIA Song. One of nine Leo Robin-Harry Warren songs used in the Paramount film **Just for You** (1952), it starts the story moving in a scene where Bing, as a Broadway producer/songwriter, demonstrates how he wants the vocal chorus to deliver his composition.

I'M AN OLD COWHAND Song. The only Johnny Mercer composition featured in the 1936 box-office success **Rhythm on the Range**. It brings the film to a rousing conclusion as Bing and cast assemble round a camp fire just in time for the anticipated happy ending. Amongst those providing vocal assistance are the Sons of the Pioneers, one of whom was Roy Rogers before he found solo fame. Bing enjoyed singing the song and included a re-recording of his July 1936 Decca hit in his musical autobiography set in 1954.

I'M HUMMIN', I'M WHISTLIN', I'M SINGIN' Song. There is a scene in **She Loves Me Not** (1934) where Bing demonstrates his up-beat frame of mind when he sings this Harry Revel-Mack Gordon song to his girl friend (Judith Allen) and her mother. But it's really Kitty Carlisle who deserves his affections and the film concludes with him driving off with Kitty and reprising the song so that the audience can leave the cinema hummin', whistlin' and singin' the catchy number.

I'M PUTTIN ALL MY EGGS IN ONE BASKET Song. Written by Irving Berlin for the Astaire-Rodgers film **Follow the Fleet** (1936) it was filmed as a Crosby vocal for Paramount's **Blue Skies** (1946). It was to form part of a medley and can be found on recordings of the soundtrack of the film. Bing never made a commercial recording of the song. Fred Astaire's Columbia Records version came to be regarded as the definitive interpretation.

IN MY HIDEAWAY Song. A composition from the Sennett short **Sing, Bing, Sing** (1933) that did not benefit from a studio recording by Crosby. It was brought before the public for a second time in 1949 when

it was in one of the clips used in the compilation film **Down Memory Lane** which utilised Sennett material. Like all songs from the Sennett one reelers it was included on the LP "Where the blue of the night..." (9199 508) but it is not a song which sticks in the memory. Written by K. L. Binford I have only encountered it in the Crosby short from 1933 although Buddy Rogers apparently enjoyed a modest success with his recording of it in 1932.

IN MY MERRY OLDSMOBILE Song. This one never received air-play from the BBC at the time of its revived popularity. That was in 1939 when Bing sang it with a bunch of kids in the Paramount production **The Star Maker**. The BBC banned all forms of advertising even though I doubt whether you could have purchased this American motor car in the U.K. at a time when this country was gearing up for war. It is used in a scene which attempts to recreate the stage act of Gus Edwards, who wrote the song together with Vincent Bryan at the turn of the century. Twenty years after its film revival Bing used it on television when Oldsmobile sponsored his television show.

IN THE COOL, COOL, COOL OF THE EVENING Song. A bright number which deserved it Academy Award Oscar as the best film song of 1951. That was the year it was featured in the film **Here Comes the Groom**. It was assembled by two of America's top song-writing talents. Hoagy Carmichael provided the music to fit Johnny Mercer's lyrics. It is the only composition by those two in the film. That is because it was originally planned to feature it in a Paramount picture which was written for Betty Hutton that never took off. It received more exposure in **Here comes the Groom** than any song was ever accorded in a Bing film. We first hear a snatch of it from Jacky Gencel, who plays one of the orphans eventually adopted by Bing. In an extension of that same scene a few more lines are duetted by Crosby and Gencel. The song is accorded full treatment when Bing and leading lady Jane Wyman duet in a scene when it seems as though she is going to marry her boss....but read on! Bing sings a few bars when he is inhabiting the gatehouse of Wyman's intending husband to be. When Bing's romantic fortunes are taking a turn for the better another chorus is provided by Bing and his "orphans" Gencel and Beverly Washburn. A little later preparations are being made for the Wyman wedding to Franchot Tone and bridesmaid Alexis Smith gives the song a twirl. The grand finale finds Bing marrying Wyman and Smith settling for Tone. This provides just cause for the newlyweds and their children to leave the wedding ceremony singing *In the cool, cool, cool of the evening*. One year later Bing made a cameo appearance in the Bob Hope starrer **Son of Paleface**. Perhaps as a thank you Bob sang a few lines of 'Cool' in his film.

IN THE LAND OF BEGINNING AGAIN Song. This 1918 song was totally suited for the poignant scene in **The Bells of St Mary's** (1945) where the parents of Patsy Gallagher (played by Joan Carroll) are reunited. Written by Grant Clarke and George W. Meyer it adds weight to an already touching sequence. Early television prints lacked the whole sequence including Bing's rendition of the song, but it has been restored for

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

subsequent tv screenings and the video tape version.

E. Scott Whalen, 5856 Hallridge Circus, Columbus, Ohio 43232-6497, USA

I've enclosed a colour photocopy of a lid from a jar that my grandmother gave to me. She can't recall what the jar contained or when she bought it, but she thinks that she acquired it in the 1930s.



I have a question for you: on the songs "I've Got the World on a String" and "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" D. Russell O'Connor claims that Benny Goodman plays clarinet. In "The Chronological Bing Crosby" vol. 12 John McNicholas claims that it is Artie Shaw. Other sources claim that it is Jimmy Dorsey. Do you have any idea as to who is right?

D. Russell Connor says this: "Benny says he cannot remember ever having recorded with Bing, and that a date in the studios with Bing isn't something he'd likely forget. They knew each other well in those days, admired each other's work. Benny recalls Bing's playing 'parlour golf' in the apartment Benny occupied in New York - putting (golf) balls into highball glasses. Bing (later) invited Benny to appear on his radio show, but it didn't come about. Benny 'regrets not having worked with Bing'. Bing termed Benny's Victor-era band 'immortal'. That they could have and should have pooled their talents is obvious; but for one reason or another, says Benny, it never happened."

"The author believed it did happen, on a session commonly listed as a Crosby - Dorsey Brothers date. The tone, style, and the lilt of the clarinet on that January 26, 1933 session seem unquestionably Benny's. Most Benny Goodman and Dorsey collectors now agree. Benny, upon listening to the record, just pressed his lips together and refused to commit himself."

Benny Goodman and Jimmy Dorsey shared an apartment in New York. Benny and Jimmy would compete with one another for work. When the telephone rang it all depended on who answered first. If Jimmy answered and the caller was asking for Benny, Jimmy would say, "Benny's not available, how may I help you." And vice versa. In this way, Jimmy and Benny took jobs from one another. It is possible that Benny answered the call for Jimmy for the date January 26, 1933 and played clarinet for Bing Crosby. After repeated listening to both takes of 'I've Got the World on a String' and 'My Honey's Lovin' Arms' I've begun to believe that maybe Benny Goodman did play clarinet on that date. However, Jimmy Dorsey and Benny Goodman can at times sound similar. I don't think Artie Shaw played clarinet as John McNicholas claims in the "Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 12". Unless he has had access to the Brunswick file for that date I would have to wonder about his choice for clarinet. It is near impossible to ascertain who is playing clarinet what with Bunny Berigan, Al Hoffman and Eddie Lang playing so prominently. Maybe someone in the ICC will have the answer.

(Editor: Thanks Scott for a very interesting item in the form of the lid. As to your query about Bing's recording session on January 26, 1933 in New York I cannot provide the answer but Fred Reynolds in his book 'The Crosby Collection 1926-1977' states the clarinetist is Jimmy Dorsey but he then goes on to say: "There is doubt about the identity of the clarinetist. Some discographies show Benny Goodman but he has been quoted as expressing his regret that he never worked with Bing Crosby. It is unlikely, therefore, that had he done so he would have forgotten."

However, John McNicholas is very thorough in his research and as his data is the most recent published, I should say that the balance of probability is that it was Artie Shaw on these tracks. Members comments would be welcomed.)

John Bignell, 21 St. Andrews Avenue, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2QB

The death of Frank Sinatra, although not unexpected, means that the second (and last) great icon of popular singing in the twentieth century has gone. It leaves a gap which will now never be filled. What particularly pleased me was the way Bing and Frank 'hit it off' together. There was no jealousy on either side and indeed why should there be? Bing set the scene, changed the face of popular music and bestrode the stage unchallenged in the 'thirties. Frank, in turn carried on the art of popular singing, not by imitating Bing but by developing his own style. For over thirty five years they dominated the vocal scene together.

I well remember that, at Bing's passing in 1977 the most poignant, sincere and moving of all the tributes came from Sinatra. He said, "Bing was the idol of my youth, the inspiration of my career, and the friend of my maturity." As a master of words, Bing would have been delighted with that. Can anyone think of a better obituary?

I was saddened to read of the passing of Benny Green (at the ridiculously early age of 70). Benny had enlivened many a Sunday afternoon for us for over twenty years. He was a great Sinatra enthusiast but I also believe he was well aware of the importance of Bing's work. Benny was in no doubt as to Bing's pioneering efforts to put popular singing at the forefront of mass entertainment in the 'thirties. Of course Benny was primarily a student of the art of composers and he devoted programme after programme to paying tribute to all the great songsmiths. It seemed to me he knew more about the 'words and music' men than anyone else and indeed he was a major influence in my increased appreciation of this great art as I grew older. Benny's love of cricket and football was another reason why I always listened to him with respect.

How the great lyric writers must have enjoyed the way their efforts were interpreted by Bing and Frank. Imagine their delight when the composers of so many wonderful songs heard them being sung to perfection just the way they themselves 'heard' them in their heads as they worked away to produce yet another gem of a song. I often think that the way Bing burst on the scene from about 1931 onwards must have ensured that there would be no dearth of new material for him (and later for Frank) for many years.



The two great icons of popular singing in the twentieth century pictured together in 1959.

One final thought, Benny Green often pointed out that Sinatra sang many beautiful songs which came from a past era. Sinatra started recording in 1939 but he resurrected many songs from the twenties and early thirties and gave them a new life. It is also true, of course, that Bing, whose career proper began some ten years earlier, also delved into the past to revive American folk songs of the early years of the century and indeed (Stephen Foster) the last century as well!

Finally how joyous that the 'Chronological Bing' series continues apace. John McNicholas tells me that he estimates that there will be eventually twenty six CDs which will cover every song and every take issued from 1926 to December 1939. One surprising fact emerges. This project, non profit making and vastly time consuming, has been received in this country with less than ecstatic enthusiasm. Wig Wiggins in the USA has virtually assured its continued success by buying and distributing 250 copies of each CD in his own country. If John had to rely on the United Kingdom ICC members, he would not have been able to continue this historic series. "God Bless the Americans" say I.

Robert C. Achorn, 41 Johnson Rd, Sutton, Massachusetts 01590, USA

In BING No. 118, Lionel Pairpoint explores the mystery of Bing's photograph appearing on the cover of the sheet music of "Two in Love," a song he apparently never sang. As Lionel's piece makes clear, that happened on other occasions with Bing, as it did with Al Jolson and other stars whose pictures helped sell sheet music. "Two in Love" may involve a special relationship, however.

In its timing and its theme, the song is close to another Meredith Willson piece, "You and I," which Bing recorded and helped promote into a major hit in 1941. My dim memory is that Willson wrote the music for "You and I" as the theme song for a radio program on which he was the orchestra leader. The tune caught on. He then wrote a lyric for it (all one long sentence). Willson published the sheet music himself (songwriters and publishers were quarrelling at the time.) He said he needed a song to promote on the back cover, so he wrote the first eight bars of "Two in Love." Reaction was positive; he finished the song quickly. So quickly, in fact, that for a week or two, "You and I" and "Two in Love" were simultaneously on the list of the 10 most popular songs in the United States. But Willson's "Two in Love" didn't have the staying power of his "You and I." He probably put Bing's picture on the cover of "Two in Love" in the hope and expectation that Bing would do for that song what he had done for "You and I." Whether Bing disliked the newer song or simply didn't get to it before it faded in popularity, I don't know. He later performed other Willson material.

I hope Bing's fans appreciate the fine job Bob DeFlores and Ron Hall did in 1996 in creating the short film, "Bing Crosby's Road to Hollywood, 1925-1933." For the time sequence, they gave well-deserved credit to your excellent Crosby diary. Their "Road" film is particularly valuable for its inclusion of Bing's "lost" 22-minute short, "Please," produced in late May, 1933, and released in November. It

turns out to be mildly amusing, at best, and dependent almost wholly on Crosby's charisma and singing.

The humour, such as it is, involves Vernon Dent, a stout comic actor who appeared in at least 29 Hollywood features between 1923 and 1947, and in hundreds of comedy shorts over those years. He had previously worked with Bing in 1931 in the Sennett short, "Dream House." In "Please," Dent is given co-starring billing with Bing. Dent also co-wrote the piece. He gets to sing one song, "Dear Old Girl." Bing recorded it three years later, but Dent performs it in full in "Please."

Bing does three songs. He sings "You're Getting to Be a Habit With Me," accompanied only by a guitar, although perhaps not the one he seems to be strumming. The number is an interesting choice, since "Please" was, if nothing else, a Paramount film promoting the studio's new star, and "Habit" was one of the hit songs of the competition, the Warner Bros. musical, "42nd Street." But Bing had recorded it in January. It was a hit for him, so Paramount was apparently willing to pay a competitor for the right to use the song on screen. The other two Bing numbers are Crosby stalwarts: "A Ghost of a Chance" which he recorded in 1932, and "Please", his "Big Broadcast" hit from 1932. Most of the singing in the short film, "Please" was recorded live, not dubbed. That led to an interesting piece of word-play by Bing.

In singing "Please" to Mary Kornman, he blows the familiar lyric about "a gloomy Romeo." He substitutes "a gloomy so-and-so," apparently picking up half of the "silly so-and-so" phrase from "I've Got the World on a String," which he had recorded four months earlier. In the production of "Please," there was obviously no time or money for reshooting to get rid of bloopers. Bing's other singing in the film is minuscule, a bit of scat singing while he is driving to Yosemite National Park, and short vocal exercises when he is trying to impress Mary Kornman, cast as a music teacher. But there is a little dubbing in the film. A deep bass voice (maybe Dent's) dubs a short excerpt from "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," supposedly being sung by a young boy played by Dickie Kilby. And Bing dubs his speaking voice during a scene when he is driving. One other song, "My Darling, Say You're Mine Tonight," is heard briefly, sung by a tenor on the radio and echoed by Dent. The radio singer sounds more like Arthur Tracy than Crosby. It's interesting to note, though, that Bing is hailed in the film as "the radio crooner." He was more than a movie star when "Please" was filmed.

Messrs. DeFlores and Hall have worked a small miracle in bringing this short back to us. Now if someone can come up with the other Crosby-Dent-Kornman short filmed in Yosemite at the same time, "Just an Echo," one more Crosby mystery will be dispelled.

(Editor: Thank you Robert for your usual erudite remarks. We do know that parts of 'Just an Echo' have been found and let's hope that the rest surfaces in due course. When I was talking to Norman Wolfe earlier this year, the subject of Bing's subtle vocal-delivery change in the mid-1930s was discussed and

subsequently I received the following letter from Vernon Wesley Taylor who wrote a series of articles on the Kraft Music Hall for Bob Machliss and his Crosby Voice magazine.)

Vernon Wesley Taylor, 4520 S. E. 73rd, Portland, OR 97206, USA

Those articles I did about the old Kraft program were meant to show that the "unchanging Bing" never really existed. Carroll Carroll made me see that clearly at the time. Of course I wanted to enlarge upon this but the theme was the history of the show, after all, so I contented myself with that; only a reference or two was included. Now, digging into the old notes and phone-conversations after about fifteen years has been a pleasure.

Mr. Carroll did not re-invent Mr. Crosby and he never claimed that he had. The gentler delivery was already evident in Bing's vocals during the early weeks of the Kraft Music Hall. However, Carroll deserves some credit for enabling Bing to enlarge his more legato style. When, through a combination of coaxing, flattering and common-sense, he calmed Bing's speaking-style down, for radio, and helped him to focus more sharply on his "mike-side" demeanour, it made Bing capable of forgetting the silly insults to his work on the earlier Woodbury broadcast by some of the sponsor's people. It also made the cagey Crosby aware of the possibilities for his music-delivery.

Carroll joined Bing in Los Angeles a couple of months after the new KMH began. When the J. Walter Thompson Agency, who produced the show, decided changes in the writing were needed, they uprooted Carroll and Norma and sent them west. Carroll was famous in the business for his sensitivity with the guest stars but he had also made some of the 'regulars' more creditable over the air (Paul Whiteman, Deems Taylor, the music critic, etc.). Bing mildly resented having Carroll thrust upon him but it wasn't long before the alert writer had gained his complete confidence. Crosby had the wonderful, rare gift of being able to accept good advice when it was offered him.

As was the custom then (and now), Bing very often first sang the songs on radio from his pictures or phonograph records before they were released, thus encouraging familiarity in the buying public. The ballads for 'Rhythm On The Range' and 'Pennies From Heaven', made in the spring and simmer of Bing's first KMH year reflect consistently the warmer, richer tones in his voice and less of the aggressive "soaring" (as he called it later). Specifically, 'Empty Saddles', 'Roundup Lullaby', 'Let's Call A Heart A Heart', 'So Do I' and 'Pennies From Heaven'. Listening to the warmth in those melodies makes it obvious that Bing Crosby was not afraid of change and all of us must be grateful for that.

Though I am rather inactive in a variety of ways, my appreciation of old friends and Crosby music has not abated. The magazine from the ICC and the work of the ICC still leads the (sadly diminishing) pack with the more than professional presentation of his career.

(Editor: Thanks Vernon for your knowledgeable comments. Some months ago, Trevor Wagstaff alerted

me to the situation at the London Palladium where Bing's plaque had disappeared as alterations were being carried out. Trevor had written to the Palladium protesting and I quickly followed suit. The following reply was subsequently received.)

Gareth Parnell, Theatre Manager, London Palladium, Argyll St., London W1A 3AB

Thank you very much for your correspondence of the 29th; I am always pleased to hear from people who obviously care for the Palladium and the world famous acts who have appeared here. Mr Crosby, of course, was one of the biggest names to appear here and his name and legend are held in high regard. The memorial plaque has indeed been temporarily removed to accommodate an extensive renovation of the theatre. As the project nears completion, I can tell you that the results are stunning: the architects have, through meticulous research, taken the look of the building right back to the way it would have appeared in 1910, when Frank Matcham, the renowned theatre architect, first unveiled the Palladium. The revamped foyer is the centrepiece of the refurbishment and is now very different in design and atmosphere to how it was before the project. This means that we have to decide on a location for the memorial plaque which is both suitable and sympathetic to Mr Crosby's memory. We do have tributes to other well-loved performers in the theatre, notably Judy Garland and Gracie Fields, and you may rest assured that the plaque will occupy as prominent and as public a place as befits a great star. You will also be pleased to learn that we are going to re-mount the brass on a mahogany frame.

(Editor: Well, that's good news and we look forward to learning the final resting place for the plaque in due course.)

Les Brice, 40 Crown Rd., Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 1AT

I am writing to thank you for the Spring issue that you and the great Crosby team have put together. I know that everyone must say the same sort of thing, but every issue seems to get better, though how that can be really puzzles me, for each one seems to be the best ever!!

As you may remember, I have been a member of the various Crosby clubs since, I believe 1961/2, and have been collecting since 1950. I first met my wife to be on the 8th May 1945. Now many people wonder how I could possibly remember the actual date, especially the younger ones, but it was the day that the war in Europe ended, and there were riotous celebrations everywhere, and, for the first time in nearly six long years there were huge bonfires during the course of the evening, which was where I met my 'child bride' as I call her to people we meet. They were strange days, in that most people did not own record players, but Gwen's (the child bride) sister did have an old wind up model, and during the five years that I courted Gwen, she bought many, many 78s. Mostly Bing I am very glad to say, though the odd Sinatra, Jolson, Ink Spots etc. did creep in. It was very hard to get 78s during the war years, and just after, but she had some crackers, 'Your Socks Don't Match', 'Oh But I Do', 'Feuding and a-fussing', etc. and many many more. One

though that stayed with me forever was 'Dear Old Donegal'. I always sang, and in 1954 I started work for a firm that mostly employed Irish labour. I worked for them for 27 years, first as a foreman carpenter, and working my way up to a site manager, if indeed you could call it working your way up. Whenever I was setting out the site or something similar I would always burst into song, and 'Dear Old Donegal' always got the Irish lads going, especially the 'Pat O'Brien came late' bit. My sister in law made us a visit last week, having long left the Old Master behind for the likes of Engelbert Humperdinck, and I played her 'Dear Old Donegal' from the new Irish CD. She was truly delighted, especially as the CD copy was in better sound quality than the old 78 that she remembered from 50 years ago.

Back in my early collecting days, when 78s cost five shillings, I still could not afford to buy all of Bing's releases, especially when in the late 40s and early 50s when about thirty 78s were released in one go. I can remember buying 'The Story of Sorrento' and I walked home in the rain when the paper sleeve got wet and the disc always sounded scratchy, and I never knew if it was indeed dodgy or was it the rain. Then I would walk round my local record shop and all the different companies had posters showing what was on release that month, and very often, a mid monthly issue. The Brunswick lists, with Bing at the head of the list was always very popular. It was shattering when Bing stopped recording for Decca and no more appearing on the Brunswick lists, or on any list most of the time. I did not know till I joined the old British Crosby Society that Bing had had weekly radio shows for over 25 years, or that he was still doing some of his 15 minute shows. How the club kept going in those days with no record releases is a mystery. What a difference now, with every issue crammed with new CD releases, and most of them real bargains, take the 'Bing and Andrews Sisters' and the Irish set that I mentioned earlier. We are in one of the best ever periods for Bing releases. Happy days!!

I see that poor old Frank has gone to the heavenly choir in the sky. He had a pleasant voice, but came across in later years as a very arrogant man. He too, as with so many of the others began to believe his own publicity, but he did have a great presence on stage, similar I would think to that of Jolson. I heard that one of Sinatra's fans said that "Crosby sent you to sleep, whilst Frank set your blood pulsing." I did note too that by 1942 Sinatra had "overtaken Crosby as the most popular male vocalist." I find this to be strange reasoning when during the 40s, Bing attained (according to the Daily Mail Book of Golden Discs) sixteen gold discs in the period. Sinatra had two, one of which 'All or Nothing at All' was an old recording with Harry James, and would you believe that the other was for his version of 'White Christmas'!

I must end this enormous letter with a comment about the cover photo on the last BING magazine. I thought at first glance that it was the album cover from the LP 'Home on the Range' but then found that it wasn't. What a pity though that Decca did not use this picture as it is marginally better than the LP version.

Doug Haywood, 14 Weaverthorpe Rd., Woodthorpe, Nottingham NG5 4NB

When receiving the BING magazine, I always turn to the 'Keeping Track' article first in the hope that there are fresh Bing CDs available. Recent purchases have been 'Top Of The Morning' and 'Bing and the Andrews Sisters'. Both these have been very enjoyable listening and quality recordings. The 'Memories' CD though outshines even these discs and it should be in every member's collection. During the month of May I went into the local Virgin record store and made for the Easy Listening section. A gentleman was already looking through the Bing CDs and seeing I was waiting he turned and said "The trouble with Crosby CDs is the number of repeat tracks that always turn up."

I asked if he was a Crosby collector. "Not really" was his reply but both he and his wife liked Bing. As it was her birthday, he thought he would buy her a Bing CD as one of her presents. I put the 'Memories' CD in his hands and said "buy this one. It can't fail to please. Furthermore should you fail to like it and should you happen to meet me again, I will personally give you your money back." Needless to say he thanked me and went on and bought the disc. I believe my money will be safe in my pocket!

Jack Larman, 9 Quinces Croft, Gadebridge, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 3JT

I have been doing some research into the 'Bing Time' radio programme broadcast by the BBC during the war. I wrote to BBC Radio 2 about this and they responded as

follows:

"This programme was produced by the Gramophone Department (which was separate from the Music Department, being concerned only with recorded music) and consisted of fifteen minutes of records sung by Bing Crosby. It began on the Forces Programme on the 21st. August 1942 and was switched to the Home Service in December 1944. It was then an occasional programme transmitted mainly on the Home Service (with one or two editions on the Light Programme) until March of 1948 with one final edition in December 1950. It appears that it was by way of being a cheap 'filler-in'. I enclose the Programme-as-Broadcast, that is, the daily log and production credits of all transmissions, for the first programme. You may be interested in another programme from the same department called 'Bing Sings'. It appears to have been much the same format, but was transmitted on the Light Programme and ran from 1945 until 1960."

The first 'Bing Time' went out at 6:30 p.m. on Friday August 21, 1942 directly after the news. Sandy Macpherson at the theatre organ had been broadcast at 5:30 p.m. and Carl Barriteau and the West Indian Dance Orchestra were featured at 7:05 p.m. 'Bing Time' played five of Bing's records and these were 'Some of these Days', 'Sailor Beware', 'Peckin', 'Stardust' (1940) and 'Shine'.

(Editor: Thanks, Jack for a fascinating reminder of the past. I'll bet this brings back a few memories to our members who remember those days.)

LIONEL'S LINES

"THE CALL OF THE FAR AWAY HILLS"

Do you remember that scene in "Shane" when Van Heflin and Alan Ladd are straining their cinematic sinews to wrest an obstinate tree stump from the bitter earth? Did you share their smiles of sweat-stained fulfilment when they finally prised that tenacious chunk of timber from the unyielding prairie? Did you think, how symbolic that Man, once again, has triumphed over all that Nature can throw at him? Or are you of the more practical persuasion that says, "What a perfect spot they've cleared to plant the radishes."

Whatever your thoughts may have been, I hope this will give you some inkling of my feelings when I am asked to pen a few words for the Summer issue of this magazine. First, there is a phone call from our "Skipper" who says, with his usual terse economy, "I shall be spending three weeks wallowing in the fleshpots of Florida. Make sure your article is on my desk by the time I return" and for the twenty-sixth time, my mind reflects a blank sheet of paper and the "what am I going to write about" dilemma it represents. I mean, dash it all, I have other pursuits, you know. I have buttercups to sniff, cloud formations to admire, birds to study and strange insects to examine.

This is the time of the year for languishing in a lounge, listening to the "murmuring of innumerable bees" and the man next door, roundly cursing his Flymo. For sitting on the verandah, cradling a balloon glass of rare Cognac while the memsahib dallies with the punkah- wallah. The time for shouldering my fishing rod, strolling down to that small carp lake on the golf course and indulging in some scintillating repartee with the toffee-nosed twit who bleats, "Aysay, hev yew ped ewer green feears?"

Maybe I should blame Bing Crosby or Johnny Burke for the man that I have turned out to be. That "ain't got a dime to my name" character, that Bing so often played in movies. The happy-go-lucky, "rolling along at a loss" vagabond who scoffs at the twin tyrannies of "Money" and "Power". Who declines to take "life" too seriously and would rather be "someplace on anywhere road". The insidious trend can be traced in my early school reports - "Sometimes just sits and dreams Makes mistakes through being inattentive".... "He still needs to speak out in a more manly fashion" - Amazingly, this last observation was made when I was only five years old. I must have grown out of this infantile shyness because eleven years on, they were saying, "When he drops his tendency to play the fool he may do well." And the dreaming

continued, long after I had deserted the groves of Academe. Imprisoned in a windowless office at 7/6d a day, imagining profligate weekends in Le Touquet until escaping this drudgery for an obligatory spell in HM Forces, where my musings created a fanciful scenario in which the CO says, "I think I'm a goner, Corporal. You'll have to take command and get these boys home. Do you reckon that you can fly this thing?"

The latest fantasy involves stumbling across this strange junk shop that I have never noticed before and will never see again. In the window is an old-fashioned, super heterodyne wireless. The odd, smiling, little proprietor doesn't haggle and it is mine for the small change in my pocket. On getting it home, I discover that the dial does not show radio stations but dates. With trembling fingers, I twiddle the knob to "1929" and hear, crystal clear, the voice of Bing, broadcasting on the first Old Gold Show with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. So, you will gather that we shall be wallowing in nostalgia again, in spite of the fact that has been pointed out to me that young shavers of between 45 and 50 are reading these columns. I've tuned to 1942 and across the ageless ether, comes the clarion call, "Command Performance USA! Presented this week and every week until it's over, Over There!" - so speaks Ken Carpenter, who served as announcer on more than 150 of these shows.

It is reputed that the title for the series was coined from a remark by Glenn Wheaton, one of the originating producers, who on hearing the suggestion that stars be "requested" to appear, said, "Request, Hell! Command them to appear!" Whether these "commands" worked out, in practice, is not known but the index of Harry Mackenzie's excellent book on the subject, shows very few insubordinates from the Hollywood salary sheets. The first Command Performance was broadcast almost exactly three months after Pearl Harbour under the aegis of the Office of War Information. Its success paved the way for the creation of the Armed Forces Radio Service, in May 1942, under the command of Colonel Tom Lewis. Positive identification and dating of the shows can pose difficulties, largely due to inconsistencies on the part of the AFRS. The regular weekly broadcasts were normally, allotted thirty minutes of air time but although numbered consecutively were not necessarily released, in that order. Whereas, those programmes deemed to be "Specials", apart from sharing the same general matrix, were unnumbered and mostly, but again, not always, of a different duration to those of the regular series (a full version of Verdi's opera, "Othello" ran for three hours!) Including "Special" Command Performances, Bing Crosby featured in some forty of the shows, frequently, as Master of Ceremonies.

The war with Japan was more than twelve months old before the American public heard their first (and only?) Command Performance. This show was a sixty minute, "spectacular", calling upon the varied talents of the Andrews Sisters, Red Skelton, Spike Jones, Charles Laughton, Dinah Shore, Edgar Bergen, Ginny Simms, Ethel Waters, Harriet Hilliard, Jack Benny and Fred Allen

with accompaniment from the Kay Kyser Orchestra and the Twentieth Century-Fox Orchestra conducted by Alfred Newman. Here are some extracts from what the press had to say:

"The War Department, on Christmas Eve 1942 gave domestic listeners their first taste of a series that has been going out to the Armed Forces on short-wave for 43 consecutive weeks. The purpose of this special occasion, as Elmer Davis, Office Of War Information chief, expressed it in a foreword to the show was to forge a link between servicemen abroad and the folks on the Home Front. A recorded version of the show was short- waved, all over the world, the next day Hope emceed, tossed off a monologue and cross-fired with Crosby A special treat, in the vocal department was the version of 'Basin Street Blues' that came out of the tonsil partnership of Bing Crosby & The Charioteers with the Al Goodman Orchestra."

In Britain, we were more fortunate, as the BBC Forces Programme had been broadcasting the series, on Monday evenings, virtually since its inception and on 25th December 1943, they were able to air, the up to date, Christmas Command Performance, recorded in Hollywood, only seven weeks previously. The shows were always produced and transcribed with a deal of expertise but time would have been at a premium and minor errors and "fluffs" tended to remain "in". Examples of this haste may be evidenced by Don Wilson's announcement of, "John Trot Scotter and his Orchestra" and Bing's horribly missed cue on "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby".

The sound effects man became an important aid in illustrating the show's gimmick of encouraging service personnel to request their favourite "sounds of home". Among those included were an Arkansas jackass; Errol Flynn taking a shower; Lucille Ball's sigh and Ann Miller, tap-dancing, in a pair of GI brogans, to "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling". Another had Bing Crosby, mixing a bourbon and soda (which was drunk by Bob Hope!) - Bing sailed through the programmes in his customary breezy fashion, pausing occasionally, to deliver more solemn messages of encouragement to "the boys" (although the inverted commas are superfluous because that is what the majority of them were), "Listen, you guys, if you happen bump into three dictators who thought they were gonna run the show and make the world dance to their music - tell 'em to get ready for the last act!"

There have been dark mutterings that some of the "commands" from the fighting men were met by editing in, excerpts from the stars' own regular radio shows. This was probably true and in Bing's case, the obvious source, at this time, would have been the Kraft Music Hall and likely candidates in this department might be, "Great Day"; "I Never Mention Your Name" and "As Time Goes By" but so far, I have yet to find the time to make any close scrutiny. Whatever the result might be, it should be noted that, in spite of Bing appearing in so many Command Performances and (including medleys), singing in excess



Bing, Claudette Colbert and Frank Sinatra take part in a similar AFRS programme G. I. Journal No. 105 which was recorded on 31st. July, 1945 at the Hollywood Canteen. Mel Blanc is the man on the left.

of a hundred songs, titles were rarely repeated.

To the casual listener, his parodied duet of Cole Porter's "You're The Top" with Frank Sinatra, used on three occasions, might seem to be blatant "repeats" but all are different and positive identifications can be made by examining the line sung by Sinatra, the words in brackets being spoken interjections by Crosby:

Victory Extra CP "You're the top, you're the head canary, You're the top"

Army Day CP "You're the top, you're the head canary, (Isn't he sweet?) You're the top"

CP No. 122 "You're the top, you're the head canary. (Nice of you to say so!) You're the top"

More overt jiggery pokery was engineered by the programmes' own producers. For example, a "Special", 75 minute show, under the auspices of the Bureau Of Public Relations from the National Theatre, Washington was recorded in August 1942. This was edited to form Command Performances Nos. 30 and 31 and a part of No. 34. Bing was Master of Ceremonies for the original of which full details are unsure but we can be aware of, at least, some of his contributions from surviving portions of CP No. 30 when he sings "Star Dust" with the Frank Black Orchestra and "Clementine" accompanied by the Music Maids with The Kay Kyser Orchestra. He also featured, in a rare vaudeville routine with James Cagney (the most recent Oscar winner for his portrayal of George M. Cohan in, "Yankee Doodle Dandy"), when they burlesqued a song, loosely entitled, "Give Our Regards To Old Broadway" and closed with, "Down By The Old Mill Stream".

The songbird from Tennessee, Dinah Shore, holds the record for the most appearances on the Command Performance series and starred with the up and coming, Danny Kaye, on the inaugural broadcast, from New York in March 1942. She was also present for Bing's debut on the series (CP No. 17) and seemed to turn up, regularly, whenever he appeared, duetting with him on such songs as, "Dancing In The Dark"; "My Old Kentucky Home" and "It's A Long Way To Tipperary" as well as the "medleys" which began when servicemen requested their favourite songs, to which the pair would oblige, alternating on unaccompanied vocals. Later, the medleys became parodied fragments of songs, often as part of a comic skit. This same formula was explored with Judy Garland on CP No. 81 and developed further with Frank Sinatra on CP No. 104 but here, the comedy lead-in to "a crooning contest" has our two songsters plus Ken Carpenter and Dinah Shore, performing in excruciating Scots accents that would have had Rabbie Burns turning in his grave.

Miss Shore also played "Tess Trueheart" to Crosby's portrayal of the lantern jawed detective in one of the most sensational of all the shows, "Dick Tracy In B Flat". Strangely enough, in spite of a running time of sixty minutes, this was not classified as a "Special" programme and was accorded the No. 162. The cast was the stuff of which dreams are made - Hope, Sinatra, Garland, Durante and the Andrews Sisters with Jerry Colonna, Cass Daley and Frank Morgan thrown in for good measure and perhaps, in other circumstances, would have been too expensive to contemplate. Meredith Willson wrote two original songs for the piece, the jokey, "Happy, Happy, Happy Wedding Day" which rattles along like a

tinker's wagon and the plaintive ballad, "Whose Dream Are You?" You may recall that Bing recorded both of these songs and it is a personal opinion that the latter was worthy of more success than it received. It seems likely that Willson also wrote the lyrics for the parodies of well-known numbers that the comic paper characters deliver with convincing vigour.

The ubiquitous, Bob Hope, was another top entertainer who obeyed the "command" on numerous occasions and as far as the audiences were concerned, it was regarded as a matter of course, that his visits, should often coincide with those of Bing Crosby, at a time when their screen alliance was at the height of its popularity and the script-writers were working overtime to boost their verbal duels, the chosen weapons being, as always, insults at two paces! Command Performances Nos. 154 & 155 were both recorded on 16th December 1944 and although there are some variations in the cast, the main participants (Crosby, Hope and the Andrews Sisters) remain the same and Bing's renditions of "More And More", featured in both shows, are identical. The second of the two programmes contained what must have been the first "public" duet of "Put It There Pal", recorded only a few days previously, by the "Road" partners. The mention of "Alaska" might put it closer to the screen version than some of their other performances of the song, but not so far removed from their recent recording session to overlook the best of the carefully scripted "ad-libs"!

On CP No. 125, there is an encounter with Harpo Marx, who would hardly qualify as the greatest act on radio, whose only means of communication was with a motor horn but fortunately, not only did he arrive with his own personal interpreter in the shape of Gary ("Yup - Nope") Cooper but he had also brought his harp to the party in

order to accompany Bing's pleasant rendition of "My Blue Heaven."

Taped copies of complete shows and excerpts still exist, ranging from good to painfully, poor condition but if you are able to close your ears to the crackles, scratches and distortion, you will hear much of Bing Crosby from this wartime series to be grateful for - wisecracking with Jack Benny, Kay Kyser and Jimmy Durante, a rare solo rendition of Romberg's, "One Alone", reprises of hit recordings with the Andrews Sisters and a droll quartet with Hope, Sinatra and Colonna. Dates can be hazy but Command Performance carried on, well after the war, until 1950 and the last of the annual, Anniversary shows, commemorating the series, was broadcast by the AFRS in 1977. The programme included two items which featured Bing - "Star Dust" from one of the earliest shows and "You've Got To Start Off Each Day With A Song" with Jimmy Durante which I suspect was "borrowed" from Philco Radio Time.

Lionel Pairpoint

P. S. We are still seeking assistance in identifying Bing's contributions to the following Command Performances: No. 17 11th June 1942 w the Merry Macs, Hugh Herbert & Don Ameche

No. 31 30th Aug 1942 w Connee Boswell and Abbott & Costello

No. 44 28th Dec 1942 w Victor Borge, Jose Iturbi & Kay Kyser

No. 115 15th Apl 1944 w Shirley Ross, Yehudi Menuhin & Dinah Shore

VE Special May 1945? w Bob Hope, Herbert Marshall, Loretta Young & Charles Boyer

No. 212 1946 with ???

(Editor: Anyone who can supply details, please contact Lionel. Address inside front cover.)



"the stuff of which dreams are made" - Bing, Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope. Meredith Willson is the man with glasses behind Hope.

ONCE IN A WHILE

Our obituary section carries one of its most important entries as we ask Ken Crossland to cover the passing of one of the greatest of the show-business giants.

FRANK SINATRA 1915 - 1998

"A singer like Frank Sinatra comes along just once in an after-life. But why did it have to be my after-life?"

Well, if we are to believe that those words originally belonged to Bing, doubtless he will have updated his text in the past month or so. For Frank Sinatra - "the Guv'nor", "O' Blue Eyes", "The Voice" finally departed this world on 14 May 1998, after a heart attack at the age of 82.

I learned of Sinatra's death in an airport lounge in Kuala Lumpur, and over the next few weeks had the opportunity to see the coverage given to it by the Australian, American and the European press. The news was not unexpected. Sinatra had not been seen in public for 18 months and had been known to be in poor health for some time.

Many of the tabloid and even the more serious papers lamented the passing of the "greatest popular singer of the century". That hum you can hear is Reg Bristo, the erstwhile editor of BING spinning in his grave. The papers of course said the same things when Bing died in 1977, but I find it difficult to see how anyone - yet, at least - can offer a view as to the "greatest" singer of the century. We might have a chance of measuring the most "influential" - or the most "popular" - or even the most "enduring" - but how do you measure the "greatest". We are all still too close to the action to be able to stand back and offer a dispassionate view about the greatest anything



Frank and Bing on The March of Dimes show, January 30, 1945

of the 20th century.

Of all the obituaries for Sinatra, the one that struck the greatest chord with me was to be found in an unlikely place - "The Economist". It made the point that Sinatra was - like Jolson and Crosby before him and like Presley and the Beatles to come - a creature of a particular time. And indeed he probably was the greatest popular singer of his time, that time being the Fifties through to the mid Sixties. Jolson had been the greatest singer of the vaudevillian Twenties - a time of music hall exuberance and low tech performing. Bing's time was the Thirties and the Forties - a time of depression and then war, a time when Bing exploited the new technology of electrical recording and amplification to create a soft, reassuring, comforting style of singing.

By the time Sinatra came around, the world was changing again. The Fifties were a time of plenty, a more brash and outgoing age of colour and fizz, and Sinatra's style and image captured the mood of those years to a "T".

Certainly we can make comparisons. Bing's was a style that concealed his art; indeed it was a key feature of "Bing Crosby Inc" that everything he did was understated. "An average guy who could carry a tune" Bing said. Can you imagine Sinatra saying that? No sir. Sinatra's singing style was quite the opposite. He used his voice the way a musician would use an instrument; took delight in bringing out the complexity and difficulty of his art. And he wrapped it all up in a persona that was designed to let everyone know that he was - or at least wanted to be - "Chairman of the Board".

Even in death, their styles differed, but for once, the roles were curiously juxtaposed. Bing's death was sudden and unanticipated, whilst Francis Albert shuffled off this mortal coil in an uncharacteristically understated fashion. What their true personal relationship was, we will probably never know. Probably not the rivals they were portrayed to be, but not bosom buddies either. Underneath, they were both true professionals, and if there's the odd duet to be had up there in the clouds, one imagines more than a little mutual respect will come through.

So let's leave the question of the century's greatest to the 21st century's music historians. Let's sit back and enjoy the rich legacy of two great singers, who brought pleasure to millions.

Ken Crossland

Alice Faye - died in May at the age of 83. Born Alice Leppert in New York City, she won a job as a chorus girl at the Capitol Theatre. Her stage name was 'borrowed' from Frank Faye, then one of the biggest names on Broadway, because she thought it sounded lucky. She was one of Hollywood's top musical stars in the late 1930s as she featured in 'Rose of Washington Square', 'Lillian Russell', 'In Old Chicago' and 'Tin Pan Alley'. She became identified with songs such as 'You'll Never Know' and 'Alexander's Ragtime Band'. She appeared twice on Bing's Kraft Music Hall during that period on February 13, 1936 and December 3rd. of the same year. Her first marriage was to singer Tony Martin

in 1937.

In 1945 she abandoned her movie career to concentrate on raising her two daughters and in 1946 she turned to radio where she starred with her second husband, Phil Harris, in a sitcom type show for several years. She returned to film work in 1961 when she appeared in 'State Fair' and her final appearance was in 1978 in 'The Magic of Lassie'. Phil Harris died in August, 1995 and we mentioned then that he had been one of Bing's closest friends. Over the years, Phil and Alice Faye saw a lot of Bing and his family but Alice only worked with Bing once during this period far as we can see and that was in the Hollywood Palace Show transmitted on February 18, 1967 when Bing, Phil Harris and Alice sang a medley together.

Maureen O'Sullivan passed away in June. She was 87. Irish-born Maureen came to fame when she starred as 'Jane' in the early Tarzan films featuring Johnny Weismuller. Her skimpy costume caused quite a furore in those days but her performances were not limited to Tarzan films however and she also appeared in more prestigious productions including 'Anna Karenina' (1935), 'Cardinal Richelieu' (1935), 'Pride and Prejudice' (1940) and 'The Big Clock' (1948) which was directed by her husband, John Farrow. The Farrowes had seven children including actress Mia Farrow. Maureen's final appearance was in 1985 alongside her daughter Mia in Woody Allen's film 'Hannah and Her Sisters'. The connection with Bing? Back in 1938, she appeared on the Kraft Music Hall with him on March 3 and November 3.

Benny Green - veteran jazz musician and radio presenter died in June at the age of 70. Originally a saxophonist with bandleaders such as Ronnie Scott and Kenny Baker, Benny became an author and wrote biographies of Fred Astaire and P. G. Wodehouse. He wrote regular columns over the years for the New Musical Express, the Observer and Punch. Cricket and George Bernard Shaw were two consuming interests for him and he wrote on both subjects. He was perhaps best known as a presenter of a programme on BBC Radio Two for 15 years which focused on a period between 1930 and 1960 when musicals were great box office. It was this activity which made him prominent in the Crosby world in the UK and he and his producer liaised frequently with our own Stan White. Stan has penned a few words which we now reproduce below.

Benny Green died, after a long illness, Monday June 22nd. He was away from his radio programme, "That's Entertainment" for a period in the past Winter, when he was in and out of hospital, during which time his spleen was removed. However the illness was not cured and according to his BBC producer - Roy Oakshot - it was returning to his programme that really kept him going. His last broadcast was on Sunday June 21st and it was recorded on the previous Friday. In it, Benny played three Bing recordings associated with Johnny Mercer.

Over the years, Benny did play a lot of Bing Crosby songs, he did like Bing and knew his place in the history of

popular music. Frank Sinatra was his favourite and it came as a blow to Benny, being so ill himself, when Frank died. At least Benny was able to broadcast an hour long tribute to Frank.

This is sad loss for BBC Radio, because these days when

programmes covering popular music are lost, the trend is to replace them with something which tends to include the 'pop' music era. Only Paul Barnes would be capable of following in Benny's footsteps, it is doubtful if he will be asked.

Stan White

Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

Two events dominate reportage in this column for the summer issue; the anniversary of Bing's 95th. birthday and the demise of Francis Albert Sinatra. Few would argue that the latter is of greater significance bearing in mind the early influence of Bing on 'the Young Pretender', their initially paralleled careers and the huge international following that Frank achieved singing the kind of words and music that is the very foundation of our own Crosby orientated circle of admirers. Sadly, and with increasing frequency, the obituary columns record the passing of both the well and lesser known musicians, singers and composers from the golden age of popular music. But that is in the natural order of things, and we can only rejoice in the fact that there is such a vast wealth of recorded material from that era featuring those creative performers that we, and those who are to follow, can savour as long as music remains an essential ingredient of mankind's emotional make-up. So let not the nostalgia be too sorrowful nor regretful. We mourn the death, but celebrate the life - for the music lives on.



The 'Young Pretender' and 'The Groaner' in an early appearance together.

Before returning to the theme as it concerns our magazine here, the usual listing of televised films indicates what is currently in or out of favour. Wouldn't you just guess that HIGH SOCIETY remains as an unshakeable constant.

MARCH

BLUE SKIES	Sky Movies Gold	6th.
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APRIL

BLUE SKIES	Sky Movies Gold	10th.
MY FAVOURITE SPY	Sky Movies 2	18th.
MY FAVOURITE BRUNETTE	Sky Movies 2	19th. 30th.
STAGECOACH	Sky Movies 1	22nd.
MY FAVOURITE BRUNETTE	Sky Movies Gold	25th.
MR MUSIC	Sky Movies Gold	26th.

MAY

HIGH SOCIETY	TNT	9th.
BLUE SKIES	Sky Movies Gold	12th.
HIGH SOCIETY	BBC2	16th.

JUNE

THE PALEFACE	Sky Movies Gold	13th.
STAGECOACH	Sky Movies 1	14th. 24th.
MR MUSIC	Sky Movies Gold	15th.
MY FAVOURITE BLONDE	Sky Movies Gold	25th.

Some thirty-six hours following the announcement of the departure from this life of the only successful member of The Hoboken Four (their first recorded performance, a creditable nod to Bing and the Mills Brothers "Shine", can be heard on Hallmark CD 330272) BBC2 chose to screen two of his musical feature films. It could be considered that a musical and a drama might have been more representative; but I guess it's all about contractual rights. However, fans who can't get enough of HIGH SOCIETY weren't complaining, although Bing's song "Little One" was cut from the version shown. But two screenings of the BBC's tribute (one they'd made earlier in obvious anticipation of the event) 'Sinatra - The Voice Of The Century' included several sightings and references to Bing, as one might have imagined. 'One of the newer fellas' was accorded vocal tributes from several of the his contemporaries with the prototype par excellence, from the Parkinson programme, saying:

"He creates a mood, which very few people are able to do. I don't think I create a mood when I sing."

Not exactly true, Bing, as I'm sure that most Crosby

addicts experience a sense of joie de vivre at varying levels of warmth, sadness, love and elation according to the tempo of the tune and your interpretation of a well written lyric. You can't get much moodier than "Black Moonlight", "I've Got To Pass Your House" and "Temptation" for example - especially the soundtrack version of the latter.

The tribute's narrator, Ali Ballantyne, in tracing Frank's beginnings said "The big singing sensation of the time was Bing Crosby." - cue to Bing singing "September Song" from the 13th. October 1957 Edsel Television Show - after which Mr. Sinatra was heard saying:

"There's no doubt that when Bing started as a young man he was influenced by the early jazz musicians who came out of New Orleans, beginning with Satchmo and a whole bunch of those people. I became influenced by those people - even Crosby himself. I never wanted to sound like him 'cos in my youth all the kids who wanted to be singers were boo-boo-booing; and that's not what I wanted to do."

At which point the camera panned across the Edsel set to

reveal Frank duetting the autumnal number with Bing. Visual clips and comments which put down any suggestion of contentious competitiveness.

"I'm sure" said Bing in his second Parky appearance, "neither of us took it as serious rivalry. I admired his work, and hoped and believed he admired mine. We saw a lot of one another on each other's shows."

The news clip of the pair of them entertaining the American troops in 1944 with a duet of "People Will Say We're In Love" might have been overstating the case just a little but, surely, neither resented the other nor suffered as a result. Their respective styles were quite distinctive - unique - and were complementary, and any discussions centred around who was the better or the most popular are largely irrelevant. "Comparisons are odorous" wrote the Bard of Avon; which is much more appropriate here than John Donne's, perhaps, cynical re-working, "Comparisons are odious."



*Bing and Frank sing a snatch of 'People Will Say
We're In Love'*

MAGICAL MEMORIES

On John Richards' radio programme, *Magical Memories*, John's guest on the 15th. May was Stan Britt, who wrote the book *'Frank Sinatra - A Celebration'* and is also issuing a representative 5-CD set. Stan was objectively praiseworthy in his tribute to 'The Twig' - one of Sinatra's early, affectionate sobriquets - but was happy to state that he is a great Crosby fan; especially in the way that Bing had that laid back, casual, almost conversational art. Sinatra wanted to do that, but more so. Frank didn't just want to be a third-rate Crosby; he wanted to be a first-rate Sinatra. And that is exactly what he did in the most determined way. Bing admitted to Stan Britt that he had a real, real challenger for his supremacy. But, added Stan, Bing, the Uncrowned King through the 'Thirties, was quite happy to be challenged in this way, even though Frank didn't sell as many records nor have as many hits. However, as a lyric interpreter, Sinatra was probably second to none. Bing recognised him as someone special and liked him both as a singer and as a person because he was different and, unlike Como, Haymes and the others, hadn't copied his style.

Our own Stan 'King Of the Organ Enthusiasts' White was recently on John's programme to promote Ken Barnes' latest release *'Some Fine Old Chestnuts - New Tricks'* which reviewed a couple pre-release tracks played on the programme. Again, Stan was able to fill in the blanks for the listeners in his erudite fashion.

GOLD FOR GROWN UPS

.... as presented by Barnsey at the Beeb, came up with a three hour Sinatra tribute on the 16th. May. This was rated so highly by the BBC that it has been recorded for posterity, and I caught the final hour of it wherein Paul played not only early Sinatra with Harry James and Tommy Dorsey, most especially for the Essex listeners, but also Bing's radio parody medley with Frank, and their "Well, Did You Evah?" duet. This live hearing, coupled with the vintage content, can be explained by the fact that a couple of weeks previously Paul had successfully negotiated for the Saturday evening hour of '78 Vintage' on BBC Essex from which, sadly, John Gunn has had to retire. We all wish John a happy semi-retirement - he may be looking in on a John Hayes programme from time to time - and thank him profusely for the many, many hours of listening enjoyment enhanced by his weekly, and unfailingly vintage, Crosby Corner. With Norfolk based P.B. picking up the threads for the final hour of his Saturday night farrago with the introduction: "Come in Essex; you're looking good." (An aviation term folks) he is weaving his own design into the pattern of the programme; so that '78 Vintage' loses its puckish humour and music-hall merriment but entwines a more intricately tailored texture into a, usually, thematic tapestry of, broadly, jazz orientated music, and unembroidered information interlaced with just a trace of well honed whimsy woven into the overall musical pastiche. From July the 5th. 'Gold For Grown Ups' will be fanning out over the Essex airwaves for the full three hours (95.3 FM where I live) as well as the Saturday sixty minutes. Previous listeners from the good old 'diving under the

duvet' days are once more going to be able to enjoy and appreciate some proper music as they wind up the wick on the feel good factor.

As predicted in these columns the musical presentation of the songs depicted on the ICC calendar is becoming increasingly difficult with each passing month and, confronted with May's "Hold Me", Barnsey had to resort to featuring "The Girl Friend" as a reasonable substitute. How's your French, Paul? Bing's "Embrasse-moi Bien" could well have been considered as an extremely close alternative.

Around the relevant weekend Bing's birthday came in for considerable recognition, with a couple of show tunes starting the ball rolling; namely, "I've Got Five Dollars" from *'America's Sweetheart'*, and the original recording of "You Took Advantage Of Me" from *'Present Arms'*. Quoting freely from the credited columns of Malcolm's Diary, Paul regaled the listeners with details of Bing's birth and, later, marriage to Fox star Dixie Lee. Various newspaper headlines have revealed just how lowly by comparison to his bride the scarcely known Bing was considered:

'Dixie Lee, film actress, today married Murray Crosey, orchestra leader, at a simple church ceremony'.

'Well known Fox star marries Bing Croveny'.

'20th. Century Fox star marries an obscure crooner'..... and so on!

However, 'Gold For Grown Ups' did him proud with a substantial part of the programme devoted to the works of The Old Groaner on the occasion of the 95th. anniversary of his natal day. An early entry was the remarkable "Out Of Nowhere" live from the Cocoanut Grove. This first ever air-shot, along with "What Is It?", still gives me goose bumps on hearing it. The sensation of being in there among the dancers is quite uncanny. A further dozen tracks were featured, which not only included "I've Got The Girl" but also such great jazz classics as "Changes", "One More Time", "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" and "Yes Indeed!" With "Slow Boat To China" - the Bing and Peggy Lee version - Paul picked up on the comment in these columns that he is attuned to the then modern bop arrangements occasionally scored by John Scott Trotter for the likes of 'Slow Boat'. By comparison I'm more of a 'Show Boat' man, finding, and I quote: 'Displaced accents, flattened fifths, and augmented ninths' too discordant for comfortable listening. Though some, of course, have been known to say that about jazz in general. Philistines all!

The enjoyable and very varied content of Barnsey's programmes for that weekend was rounded off with "Tomorrow's My Lucky Day" which, though it may sound as if recorded by microphone in front of a radio speaker, was, in fact, issued on 78 rpm records both in the States and the UK (Philips PB817). A 'Round Robin' advising potential listeners of the greater catchment area, as Paul pushes back the boundaries, is circulating among all known enthusiasts. Spread the good word; we're a growing force in all that's best in proper music as written and performed by proper artistes on proper musical instruments!

SUNDAY LATE SHOW

If you can begin to pick up that particular programme then you know you must be well along the M4 heading West and listening to the engaging though mildly hesitant voice of Chris Robinson. Always a good friend of Crosby enthusiasts and, reciprocally, the receiver of most of the important Bing releases, Chris was also in the forefront of those who recognised the 1903-1998 event. Being rather partial to that early phase in Bing's career illustrated by "St Louis Blues" and, during the course of the programme, "I Wished On The Moon" and the original "Where The Blue Of The Night", Chris moved forward in time to note that the GIs had voted Bing as the guy who had given them the biggest boost to morale during the difficult times of the second world war. Chris progressed with his million seller count through the 12th., "I Can't Begin To Tell You", to the 20th.; "Dear Hearts And Gentle People", finding time along the way to feature, along with other tracks, the less commonly heard "All My Love" and, quite unintentionally, as he meant to operate the fader on a Benny Goodman number, "There's A Fellow Waiting In Poughkeepsie"! This latter recording has cropped up quite a few times in recent months. On another occasion, and following the playing of "The Isle Of Innisfree", Chris responded to a lady's letter in which she wrote that she'd forgotten what a marvellous voice Bing had by saying 'She can't have listened to this programme very often, 'cos we're regularly playing Bing songs!' Very true. Time and again I receive cassettes from Maggie Ryan on which Chris is the most frequently and interestingly featured participant.

GOLDEN OLDIES

The title of a programme is, presumably, intended to convey its content and this one is no exception being full of good music. Again the birthday tributes, with its host, Dewi Griffiths, reminding listeners that a couple of years ago they had voted Bing 'The greatest entertainer of your lifetime.' Leslie Gaylor had sent Dewi a copy of the now famous baptismal certificate so that he was able to quote quite accurately the details of Bing's birth. To mark the occasion "I'll See You In My Dreams" was the principal song but, earlier, "Moonlight Becomes You" was featured as a 45th. wedding anniversary treat for the wife of an erstwhile Catalina pilot operating in the Indian Ocean who related how at their Mauritius base that recording was constantly played. Proving once again that a particular record or piece of music is probably the greatest kick start for an unashamed wallow in nostalgic remembrance.

STRING OF PEARLS

David Lowe found time to honour the birthday boy with four tracks beginning with "If You Love Me" followed by "Young At Heart" from a GEC radio broadcast from 1954 noting, as many of us do, that, invariably, film soundtrack songs and air-shots are superior to studio releases. Perhaps it's because Bing's laid-back style is allowed full rein and not subject to any pressure to perform to 'perfection'. Also featured were "Blue Hawaii" and an all-time favourite of mine, "Red Sails In The Sunset".

MUSIC BOX

Anne Hopper's, that is. How evocative most of the programme titles are! Rotate the dial just a little to obtain the very nicest notes, and a silver-tongued presenter who is learning more and more about Bing, his life and career as weeks and months go by. Kept well supplied with new CD issues Anne is always ready to give Mr. Crosby plenty of air time, speaking of him in almost reverential tones! Recent playings, including a birthday tribute, have included "The Pleasure Of Your Company" and "The Entertainer" - two top duets from the United Artists collection - and a couple of non-commercial numbers of such excellence that amply support the proposition that Bing invariably produced a superior performance in these circumstances. The two tracks, both duets, were "You're The Top" with Ethel Merman from the film 'Anything Goes', on which Bing sounds as rhythmically melodic as a well played musical instrument, and "Again", with Peggy Lee, from a 1949 Chesterfield Show; a lovely, lilting performance from two great artistes. Also from the wireless we heard the Irving Berlin counter melody duet of "You're Just In Love" that Bing sang with Satchmo, again on the Chesterfield Show, in April 1951, and which appears on the very enjoyable 'Fun With Bing & Louis' CD; so superior to earlier LP releases of this material of disappointingly poor to indifferent quality. The air-shot compact discs are coming out at such a rate that it's difficult for both us aficionados and the presenters to keep pace of it all. Still, that's one of life's little problems that none of us minds coping with!

BENNY GREEN

After writing the ensuing piece came the sad news of Benny's death on the 22nd. June. His final, recorded programme included three Bing tracks - all Johnny Mercer orientated: for he was the subject of the programme. No full details are to hand except the song titles, which were "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby", "Mister Meadowlark" and "I'm An Old Cowhand". Over the years Benny Green played quite a lot of 'The Old Groaner', most of which came from the classic Crosby years of the early to mid-Thirties. He knew what he liked and was pretty scathing of that which he didn't. There were times when I riled up, and times when I thought; "Yes, well, the old boy knows what he's talking about." His long tenure at a peak listening time indicated his integrity and value in an era of, if we're not careful, fast disappearing musical values. He will be missed. What follows here is as written before news of his demise, and remains unchanged.

The song "That's Entertainment" heralds erstwhile jazz saxophonist B.G.'s appearance on his hour long Sunday programme celebrating the works of composers and lyricists which, on this occasion in late February, devoted a substantial part of the proceedings to Ken Barnes' United Artists 3-cd set. The down to earth and usually acerbic Mr. Green was as generous to Bing as I have ever heard him, I believe, and delved freely, with some insight, into the content of the three albums. Having been quite friendly with Johnny Mercer it was Mercer's contribution in both words and participation that interested him

initially, though Irving Berlin, coupled with Fred Astaire, also attracted much interest. Especially numbers written for the Fred and Ginger musicals. Later, as a finale, Cole Porter's 'I've A Shooting Box In Scotland' earned much praise for its amusing levity and the deft delivery by the 'two venerable performers', noting along the way that this 1916 comedy number, featured in 'See America First', was one of the rare occasions that Cole Porter co-wrote a song - in this case with school friend T. Lawrison-Riggs. Other tracks culled from the collection were "Roxie", "Change Partners", "Good Companions" (only all-American lyricist Johnny Mercer could inventively rhyme '.... sitting duck or sticky wicket; this old life's a game of cricket', and get it right observed Benny, a great cricket

enthusiast.); and, from two performers who had plenty in common, "Nothing In Common". We have plenty in common with Benny Green, too. Including the desire and ability to air our views and argue a corner!

These columns could run on and on, possibly boringly so, with the amount of material being broadcast. But I've been requested by Malcolm to keep them to an acceptable length following the last issue's marathon reportage of the 20th. anniversary. So, it's time to store, file and dispatch what we've got here. Meanwhile, let the good times roll! It ain't gonna rain no mo'. Oh, yeah?

Bert Bishop

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

Yet again we have a good selection of CDs to review this time around. I wonder if there has ever been a period so fruitful to the Crosby cause? In the latter days of the LPs we were sometimes lucky if we had two or three albums to review in an issue. All in all I know my collection has gained considerably from the advent of the CD and long may they continue to be released. It is probably unrealistic to think that we will ever get all of Bing's commercial recordings on CD but we get ever closer as time goes by and there are many titles that are new to CD in this crop of discs.

Bing Crosby Going Hollywood Vol. 1 (2CDs) Jasmine Records JASCD 108/9

UK

I mentioned this double album in my last reviews and listed the contents, but as I had not heard it I was unable to review it fully. The overall quality is good and I found this to be an enjoyable album even though the majority of tracks have been in our collections for many years. The film buffs among us will no doubt be pleased with the sound track inclusions that are new to CD. I particularly like "I Wish I Were Aladdin". Geoff Milne has put together some fine notes and the sleeve has a nice photograph of Bing from "The King Of Jazz" which Geoff tells me came from the original publicity photos. It is great to see Geoff's continued interest in Bing - he has done us proud over the years. I am very much looking forward to the next issues in the series. If you haven't been able to locate this double album in the shops UK members can obtain copies by sending a cheque for £14.00 post free (Overseas Members add £1), made payable to "Jazmail", Unit 8, Forest Hill Trading Estate, Perry Vale, London SE23 2XL. Letters should be addressed to Paul Pelletier.

Running Time: CD1 - 67:20, CD2 - 71:33.

Price £14.00

Note: Jazmail now have four CDs on which Bing appears in their latest catalogue: Rosemary Clooney - "Hey Look Us Over JASCD 318", Rosemary Clooney - "Something To Remember Me By JASCD 335", "Fun With Bing & Louis JASCD 336" and "Going Hollywood Vol. 1 JASCD 108/9".

Bing Crosby with Buddy Cole

Some Fine Old Chestnuts & New Tricks

Do You Ever Think Of Me
I Never Knew
Somebody Loves Me
After You've Gone
Sleepy Time Gal
Dinah
I Never Knew (I Could Love Anybody)
I Can't Give You Anything But Love
In A Little Spanish Town
Ol' Man River
Honeysuckle Rose
Swanee
When I Take My Sugar To Tea
On The Alamo
I'm Confessin'

MCA MCLD19377

UK

Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea
Georgia On My Mind
Chicago
You're Driving Me Crazy
Avalon
Chinatown My Chinatown
If I Could Be With You
Softly As In A Morning Sunrise
Alabama Bound
Bonus Tracks:
More Than You Know
Rain
Church Bells
Day By Day
Prove It By The Things You Do

I am sure that those people who missed out on the very expensive separate Japanese CD releases of "Some Fine Old Chestnuts" and "New Tricks" will be very pleased to obtain this CD. The added bonus tracks never appeared on the original LPs so this is the complete collection of the commercial recordings of Bing with Buddy Cole on one CD. "Church Bells" and "Prove It By The Things You Do" make their debuts on CD. Ken Barnes produced the album and the quality is extremely good. Ken and fellow member Stan White wrote the liner notes. It was Stan's original suggestion that lead to the CD being produced. I expect that many of you know of Stan's friendship with Buddy Cole until his untimely death in 1964. This album is part of the excellent MCA series "Two Original LP's On One Classic CD" which have all been produced by our friend Ken.

Other albums in the series include Ella Fitzgerald, The Mills Brothers & Count Basie, Peggy Lee, Jeri Southern, Louis Armstrong and Jack Jones (at his prime). All these CDs are excellent and I would recommend them as very good value for money. The Bing one is of course the best.

Running Time: 77.17

Price: £10.99

The Chronological Bing Crosby

With Every Breath I Take (A)
 With Every Breath I Take (B)
 June In January (A)
 June In January (B)
 Love Is Just Around The Corner (A)
 Love Is Just Around The Corner (B)
 Maybe I'm Wrong Again (A)
 Maybe I'm Wrong Again (B)
 With Every Breath I Take (S/T film)
 Soon
 Down By The River
 It's Easy To Remember (B)

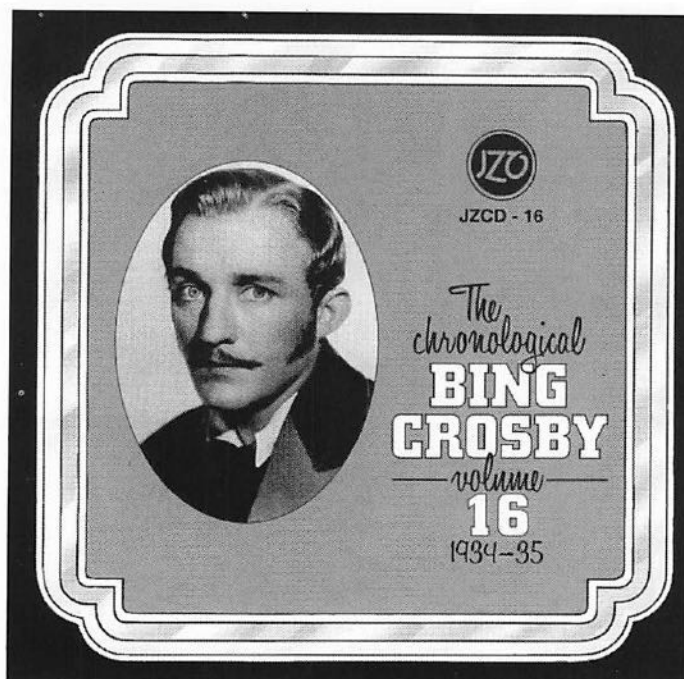
This album covers the period Nov 9, 1934 - August 14, 1935 and a glance at its content shows that there is some very rare material included. The following tracks make their debuts on CD: - With Every Breath I Take (B); June In January (B); Maybe I'm Wrong Again (B); It's Easy To Remember (Unknown Take); Silent Night; Adeste Fideles / Lift Up Your Hearts / Stabat Mater and I Wish I Were Aladdin. There may be some people, who will raise their eyebrows when they hear Bing arguing with Jack Kapp, although these days I expect that most will take it in their stride - after all Bing was only human. I must admit that I am disappointed with the amount of surface noise throughout but altering the controls on your system can eliminate this to some extent. One has to bear in mind that this very rare old material and still sounds much better than if you were to listen to it in its original 78rpm format. We tend to get used to hearing enhanced sound these days and I hope that the surface noise won't put you off purchasing this album, as the actual clarity of sound is indeed extremely good. There is an unusual photograph of Bing on the front sleeve in "Mississippi Mode" - complete with moustache. This CD is only available in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7DL. Price £10.60 including pp. (or two for £21). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

Running Time: 70.34

Jonzo Records JZCD-16

It's Easy To Remember (Unknown Take)
 Swanee River
 Silent Night
 Adeste Fideles / Lift Up Your Hearts / Stabat Mater
 From The Top Of Your Head
 I Wish I Were Aladdin
 Takes Two To Make A Bargain
 Two For Tonight
 Without A Word Of Warning
 I Wished On The Moon (Argument with J Kapp)
 I Wished On The Moon

UK



The Chronological Bing Crosby

The Calinda (1)
 Poor Butterfly (1)
 Sunshine (2)
 Sunshine (3)
 From Monday On (3)
 Mississippi Mud (2)
 Mississippi Mud (3)
 High Water
 From Monday On (4)
 From Monday On (6)

Jonzo Records JZCD-3

What Price Lyrics (1)
 What Price Lyrics (3)
 I'm Wingin' Home (2)
 I'm Wingin' Home (3)
 Metropolis - Part 3 (3)
 Metropolis - Part 3 (4)
 Lovable
 March Of The Musketeers
 I'm Afraid Of You (3)
 I'm Afraid Of You (4)

UK

I think that I should point out that 'The Calinda' and 'Poor Butterfly' should really have appeared on JZCD2 for them to have been in chronological order, but these tracks have only recently come to light. The following titles are new to CD: -The Calinda (1); Poor Butterfly (1); Sunshine (2); I'm Wingin' Home (2 & 3); March Of The Musketeers and I'm Afraid Of You (3 & 4). I cannot comment on the quality, as I have not heard this CD prior to my notes going to Malcolm. It is only available in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7DL. Price £8.50 including pp. Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

The Best Of Bob Hope Thanks For The Memory

Thanks For The Memory w Shirley Ross
Two Sleepy People w Shirley Ross
Put It There Pal w Bing
Road To Morocco w Bing
Penthouse Serenade (When We're Alone)
w Shirley Ross
The Lady's In Love With You w Shirley Ross
Chicago Style w Bing
Merry-Go-Run-Around w Peggy Lee and Bing

MCA Half Moon Series HMNCD033

UK

Hoot Mon w Bing
Road To Bali w Bing
The Boys With The Proboscis w Jimmy Durante
Put It There Pal (Alternate take) w Bing
Road To Morocco (Alternate take) w Bing
Home Cooking w Margaret Whiting
Nothing In Common w Bing
Paris Holiday w Bing
Buttons And Bows w The Clark Sisters

Had you been looking at the teletext on your television in June you might possibly have seen the report that Bob Hope had passed away. It was even reported in Congress. We were later told that a person working on Bob's obituary inadvertently put it out over the Internet. Fortunately at the time of going to press Bob was still with us at the ripe old age of 95. The quality of this most enjoyable CD is as you would expect very good. The majority of the titles appeared on the American MCA release "Bob Hope And Friends" MCAD -10611 although there are four additional tracks included; Home Cooking, Nothing In Common, Paris Holiday and the Academy award song Buttons And Bows. With the exception of The Road to Hong Kong (what a pity this wasn't included) we have all the commercial recordings that Bing made with Bob on this budget priced CD. Running Time: 46.00 Price: £6.99

At the time of writing there were no release dates available for the following CDs in the "Bing Crosby Meets" series.

Bing Crosby Meets Al Jolson - The Complete Collection

BMG (Number. not known)

UK

CD One -April Showers

April Showers; When The Red Red Robin Comes Bob-Bobbin' Along; Back In Your Own Backyard; You Made Me Love You; Waitin' For The Robert E Lee; I've Got The Sun In The Morning - **Bing Solo**; Early Days -The young Crosby seeks advice from a Star - featuring Always; Ma Blushin' Rosie; Chat; Swanee - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Philco Commercial - "Goof"; A Rainy Night In Rio - **Bing Solo**; Chat; The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else; What Am I Gonna Do About You - **Bing Solo**; Chat; Let Me Sing And I'm Happy - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Rockabye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody -**Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Who Paid The Rent For Mrs Rip Van Winkle; 2nd Philco Commercial; The Anniversary Song; Announcement; A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight w John Charles Thomas; Oh Susanna w John Charles Thomas; Medley: In The Evening By The Moonlight / Hear Dem Bells; Beautiful Dreamer - **Bing Solo**; The Banks Of The Wabash; Chat; Alabamy Bound w John Charles Thomas; I Can Dream Can't I - **Bing Solo**; Toot Toot Tootsie - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; I Only Have Eyes For You; Waitin' For The Robert E Lee; Introducing Irving Berlin; Oh How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning - Irving Berlin; Chat; Lazy - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Getting Nowhere - **Bing Solo**; All By Myself; Alexander's Ragtime Band; Easter Parade; Goodnight Chat;

CD Two - Happy Times

Bye Bye Baby - **Bing Solo**; Bing Introduces Jolson; Is It True What They Say About Dixie? - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Carolina In The Morning; My Blue Heaven; Alabamy Bound; Kate - **Bing Solo**; Ma Blushin' Rosie; Chat; Sunbonnet Sue; Chat; A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody; The Best Things In Life Are Free; Back In Your Own Backyard; Baby Face; The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else; All By Myself; Chat; THE AL JOLSON SHOW - w guest star Bing Crosby; Intro. April Showers; For Me And My Gal - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat with Oscar Levant; Peg O' My Heart; Chat with Bing; The Whiffenpoof Song - **Bing Solo**; Chat; Carolina In The Morning; Chat; Beautiful Dreamer; Chat; Gershwin Medley: (a) Rhapsody In Blue - Oscar Levant piano (b) Swanee - **Bing** (c) The Man I Love- **Al** (d) Lady Be Good - **Bing** (e) Somebody Loves Me - **Al** (f) Embraceable You - **Bing** (g) I Got Rhythm - **Al** (h) It Ain't Necessarily So - **Bing** (i) Concerto In F **Oscar Levant piano**; (j) Summertime - **Al** (k) Strike Up The Band; THE BING CROSBY SHOW San Francisco February 1950; Happy Times - **Bing Solo**; Chat; California Here I Come **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Yacka Hula Hickey Dula; Chat; Whispering; Chat; Bye Bye Baby; Chat; Waitin' For The Robert E Lee; THE FINAL SHOW New York April 10,1950; Bing Introduces Jolson; Give My Regards To Broadway - **Al Jolson Solo**; Chat; Ma Blushin' Rosie; Chat; Avalon; Chat; Lullaby Of Broadway; Chat; My Old Kentucky Home

I was slightly surprised when Ken Barnes told me that he was working on this album as much of the Bing and Al Jolson radio broadcast performances had previously been issued on Parrot PARCD 004 and re-issued on Avid AVC626. However, I should point out that the Parrot CD did not contain all of the songs from the twelve radio programmes in which Bing and Al pooled their considerable talents. This new CD contains every version of the duets they sang and is the complete collection of their radio work together. The sound quality is excellent and it is by far the best that I have heard of any radio broadcasts reproduced on CD - even 'April Showers' sounds better than ever before. There is a marvellous continuity throughout and it is obvious that a lot of thought has been put into the running order. The individual solos selected by Ken are a real joy to hear and the banter between the two stars is as fresh today as it was at the time it was recorded. With over 2½ hours playing time, Ken has produced the definitive Crosby /Jolson album and I am sure that it will make a welcome addition to your collections. I recommend it to all.

Running Time: CD1 - 75.04, CD2 - 78.02

Price: £11.00 Approx.

Bing Crosby Meets Frank Sinatra

Them There Eyes - Bing
 There Goes That Song Again - Frank
 I Love You (Porter) - Bing
 Chat - Frank, Bing, Judy Garland & Bob Hope
 All The Things You Are - Frank
 MEDLEY (Comic Parodies): You Are My Sunshine /
 Sonny Boy, You're The Top - Bing, Frank & Judy
 You Are Too Beautiful - Bing
 BING CROSBY KMH - Nov 16, 1944
 Bing (in Hollywood) Introduces Frank (in New York)
 These Foolish Things - Frank
 Chat
 FRANK SINATRA IN PERSON Nov 20, 1944
 There's No You - Frank Chat
 Frank (in New York) Introduces Bing (in Hollywood)
 I'll Be Home For Christmas - Bing
 Chat & COMEDY MEDLEY: Inc. It Could Happen
 To You, Out Of Nowhere, Going My Way, Sunday
 Monday Or Always - Frank and Bing
 Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry - Frank
 A Gal In Calico - Bing

This album was being finished off at the time of going to press so I am therefore unable to review it in this issue. Much of the content is new to CD although the material from the Bing Crosby Shows of March 21 & 28, 1954 and some of the other medley material has also appeared on a couple of CDs. I am particularly pleased that Ken has again chosen some excellent Bing solos: - For You For Me Forevermore; Tallahassee; I Love You (Porter); You Are Too Beautiful; But Beautiful and The Night Has A Thousand Eyes. Frank Sinatra also sings some great numbers so this looks like being another good CD to add to our collections.

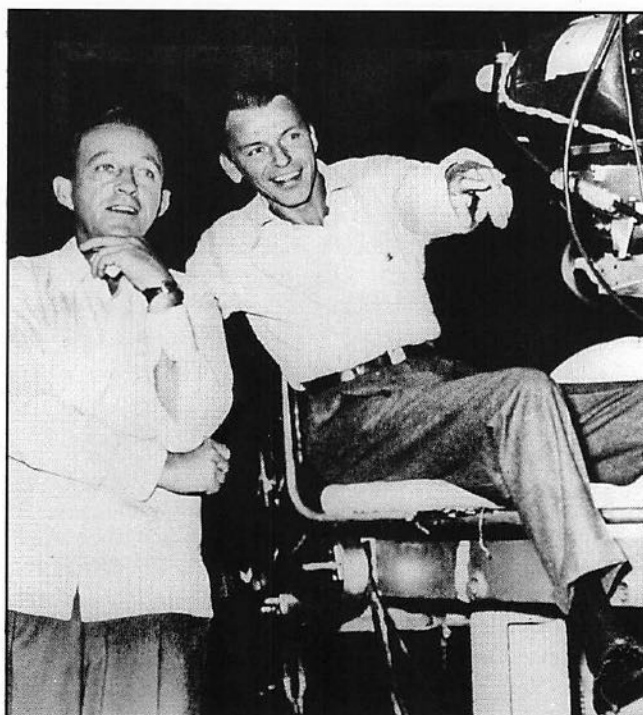
Ken tells me that the next album in the series will be "Bing Meets Ella And Louis".

BMG (Number not known)

For You For Me Forevermore - Bing
 If I Loved You - Frank
 Tallahassee - Bing
 What A Difference A Day Made - Frank
 But Beautiful - Bing
 It's Magic - Frank
 The Night Has A Thousand Eyes - Bing
 It's A Good Day - Bing
 THE BING CROSBY SHOW March 21, 1954
 Bing introduces Frank
 Young At Heart - Frank
 Chat and introduction to Duet Medley
 Among My Souvenirs; September Song; As Time Goes By

THEIR FINAL BROADCAST - THE BING CROSBY SHOW - March 28, 1954

Bing introduces Frank
 Take A Chance - Frank
 Chat and introduction to Final Duet Medley
 Till We Meet Again / Meet Me Tonight In
 Dreamland There's A Long Long Trail A-Winding



Bing Crosby meets Frank Sinatra

Songs From The Movies

You Belong To My Heart
 A Gal In Calico
 Ain't Got A Dime To My Name
 On The Atcheson Topeka And Santa Fe
 September Song
 Aren't You Glad You're You
 I Can't Begin To Tell You
 Baia
 I'd Rather Be Me
 Oh But I Do
 As Long As I'm Dreaming
 Swinging On A Star

Empress RAJCD 895

The Bells Of St Mary's
 It Could Happen To You
 Blue Skies
 If You Please
 Oh What A Beautiful Morning w Trudy Erwin
 Country Style
 More And More
 It's Anybody's Spring
 People Will Say We're In Love w Trudy Erwin
 Sunday Monday Or Always
 Out Of This World
 Going My Way

UK

UK

This is an enjoyable compilation of songs from the big screen and the overall quality is better than some previous CDs I've had from the same label. There is however surface noise on most tracks, which can be somewhat reduced by adjusting your controls. I think that the CD is quite good value for money. 'More And More' and 'It's Anybody's Spring' are to my knowledge making their debuts on a Bing CD and a number of other titles have had very little exposure on CD. It is nice to see that the sleeve notes identify the films that the songs appeared in.

Running Time: 70.33

Price: £6.49

Bing Crosby 36 All-Time Greatest Hits (3CD Set)

MCA Special Products MSD3-37079

USA

Vol. 1 Swinging On A Star; Thanks For The Memory; The Bells Of St Mary's; The Moon Got In My Eyes; Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral; Where The Blue Of The Night; The Whiffenpoof Song; Yah-Ta-Ta Yah-Ta-Ta (Talk Talk Talk); Georgia On My Mind; MacNamara's Band; Memories Are Made Of This; Mona Lisa

Vol. 2 Gone Fishin'; I Surrender Dear; In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening; Mexicali Rose; You Are My Sunshine; You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby; You're A Sweet Little Headache; Moonlight Bay; My Isle Of Golden Dreams; My Melancholy Baby; Night And Day; Please (1940)

Vol. 3 Sail Along Silvery Moon; Sam's Song; Sioux City Sue; Sweet Leilani; Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive; Alexander's Ragtime Band; Blue Hawaii; Blue Skies; Day By Day; Deep In The Heart Of Texas; Don't Fence Me In; Galway Bay

You may recall that Wig Wiggins mentioned this box set in the last issue of BING and advised where it could be purchased. I have not heard this myself so cannot comment on the quality. All the titles have appeared on CD previously but it is nevertheless a good selection. The set was released last year but should still be available.

Bing On Radio - Chesterfield Shows

Chesterfield Intro.v Music Music Music

Wilhelmina

Candy And Cake

A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes

Copper Canyon

My Foolish Heart

Small Fry w Donald O'Connor

I Waited A Little Too Long

Blacksmith Blues

If

The Roving Kind

Across The Wide Missouri

Too Late Now

I Apologise

This is part of a series of Bing On Radio Chesterfield Shows by Bar-One and the quality is very good. There is a little surface noise on some tracks but this does not spoil the enjoyment of this marvellous radio material. A thoroughly enjoyable set of albums that are well worth adding to your collections. I have always liked Bing singing Across The Wide Missouri; The Roving Kind and A Dream Is A Wish Your Heart Makes and am pleased to get these titles on CD. I am given to understand that these CDs are produced to order requirements and that they can be obtained through Barry Whittingham, El Rancho Grande, 25C Garton Close, Cinderhill; Nottingham NG6 8RZ. Cheques to be made payable to Barry.

Running Time: 71.05

Bar - One Records BCR 4

UK

You're Just In Love w Louis Armstrong

Play Ball

Because Of You

How High The Moon

Home On The Range w Dottie & Bob

Down Yonder

Undecided

Slowpoke

Charmaine

Silver On The Sage

'Noodlin' Rag

Never Before

Over A Bottle Of Wine

Chesterfield Advert - Again w Peggy Lee

Price: £10.00

Space does not permit me to list all the titles on the next two albums but in order to wet your appetite I will list a few of the titles that appear on each CD.

Bing On Radio - Chesterfield Shows

Bar - One Records BCR 5

UK

27 tracks including: Just One More Chance; It's No Sin; I Love My Baby; Am I In Love; Would I Love You Love You; With A Song In My Heart; I'll Walk Alone; The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise; Them There Eyes; Quizas Quizas Quizas; Maria Bonita; Row Row Row. *Again the quality is excellent and this is a great selection of songs from the Chesterfield Shows.* Running Time: 70.09

Price: £10.00

Bing On Radio - Chesterfield Shows

Bar - One Records BCR 6

UK

28 tracks including: Make Believe You Are Glad When Your Sorry; I've Got A Crush On You; The Last Mile Home; The Headless Horseman; A Kiss To Build A Dream On; I Whistle A Happy Tune; In My Merry Oldsmobile; Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo; Bushel And A Peck. *I can only reiterate what I said above. I'm sure that you will enjoy all three of these albums.* Running Time: 72.10

Price: £10.00

NOTE: A full track listing for all the albums in the series can be provided on request if you send a 1st class stamp to Barry Whittingham.

Great Singers - Bing Crosby

Beautiful Dreamer

Darling Nellie Gray

Ah Sweet Mystery Of Life

Deep Purple

Sweethearts

Where The Blue Of The Night

Pennies From Heaven

Duet Music DUETCD 153

Austria

Street Of Dreams

Brother Can You Spare A Dime

A Ghost Of A Chance

Please

Dancing In The Dark

Stardust

I Found A Million Dollar Baby

Out Of Nowhere
How Deep Is The Ocean

Goodnight Sweetheart
White Christmas

Please don't ask me where you can obtain this CD, as I have no idea. I got my copy from the second hand section in a local specialist shop. All the tracks have been on CD before although one or two of them have only made rare outings. The quality is OK and it is a pleasant enough CD, considering that I only paid £2.90 for it. Running Time:55.20 Price: Not Known

Japanese Bing Releases

American members may be interested to know that Wig Wiggins tells me that he has found a mail order company who can supply Japanese Bing CDs. Their current catalogue lists a total of 13 CDs available including the rarely seen album "Holiday In Europe" and one rather suspect album entitled "The Old Rampwriter" - Ah So! Anyone wanting to know which albums are available can write to me with SAE. I am sure that this would also apply to Wig for our American Members.

Please Note

I still have one or two copies of the following CDs - Bing Crosby's Gold Records MCA MCAD-11719; My Favorite Irish Songs MCA MCAD-21048; Harry Lillis Take A Longer Look HLYCD-002, Harry Lillis On Stage HLYCD-003 and Lillis, Love and a Covered Wagon HLYCD-004. Also there are still quite a few of the Derek Parkes CDs available. Please send SAE to me for up to date list and prices.

Guest Appearances

The Best Of The Big Bands Paul Whiteman & His Orchestra Sony Music Sp. Prods 8437 USA

10 Tracks (4 Bing) That's My Weakness Now; Get Out And Get Under The Moon; Tain't So Honey Tain't So and Because My Baby Don't Mean Maybe Now.

Academy Award Losers

Castle Communications MAC CD355

UK

20 Tracks (2 Bing) Moonlight Becomes You and Pennies From Heaven

I am indebted to Wig Wiggins for sending me the above two CDs.

Prices: Not Known

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CD1 18 Tracks (1Bing) Swinging On A Star **CD2** 18 Tracks (1Bing) White Christmas

Price: £18.99

18 Croonin' Love Songs

EMI 72 43 8 55376 22

UK

18 Tracks (1Bing) True Love w Grace Kelly

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Hits Of 47

ASV Living Era CDAJA 5258

UK

24 Tracks (3 Bing) A Gal In Calico; Alexander's Ragtime Band w Al Jolson; The Whiffenpoof Song - Price: £8.99

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those members who were kind enough to send me get well wishes during my periods of hospitalisation earlier this year. I am sure that you will be pleased to know that I am now feeling well and have got over my operation and other problems. I would also like to apologise to those members who waited for my prolonged replies to their correspondence since the last issue of BING.

Jim Reilly

ANNOUNCEMENT



THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

33rd ANNUAL DINNER/MEETING

MANSION HOUSE, ROUNDAY PARK LEEDS

SUNDAY OCTOBER 4th 1998 3 PM - 10 PM



A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all International Crosby Circle members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner/meeting in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds

The dinner menu will be:

**HALF A PINK GRAPEFRUIT WITH ORANGE SEGMENTS WITH GRAND MARNIER
AND CREAM**

LOIN OF PORK WRAPPED IN PASTRY, FILLED WITH APPLE STUFFING AND CIDER SAUCE

CHOCOLATE AND CONTREAU PARFAIT STUDDERED WITH NIBBED ALMONDS

COFFEE AND MINTS

Please book by sending a cheque for £15 to Michael Crampton

Tickets will be available at the meeting

Accommodation can be obtained by contacting the Rydal Bank Hotel

Telephone 0113 266 1178

The Gramophone - Part Two

In BING 116, we quoted extracts from 'The Gramophone' magazine which had been supplied by Trevor Wagstaff. The data covered the period up to 1951 and I have now received another binder of information for the ensuing years which again makes most interesting reading as it take us from 78s to compact discs.

To set the scene, the April 1950 edition of 'The Gramophone' had a long editorial about the "new long-playing records", by Compton Mackenzie no less, which seemed to recommend that collectors should have a good 78 player and also in addition a good 33.3 player "in order to avoid any disappointment in the new records."

The January 1952 edition contained some nice words about Bing:

One can rely on Bing Crosby for some Christmas cheer, and on Bruns. 04838 he sings 'Christmas in Killarney' and 'It's Beginning To Look Like Christmas'. Both these are Bing's style entirely, and so for that matter are 'My Own Bit of Land', a nostalgic, homey song of great appeal, and 'With This Ring I Thee Wed', quite delightful.

The comments in the March 1952 magazine were more mixed:

Turning to the male singers, we find four sides by Bing Crosby, including one of his best of recent times, 'The Last Mile Home' (Bruns. 04868), in which he whistles as in days of yore; and those days are recalled by the reissue (04867) of the original 1931 recording of 'Just One More Chance', with more whistling and that bobba-bobba noise he used to make. How recording has improved since then! This sounds pinched and nasal.

Well, Bing did have a cold when he recorded that track! Bing's Christmas offerings were usually well appreciated as evidence these words from the January, 1953 edition.

Bing Crosby is very cheerful and seasonable in 'Sleigh Ride' (with some singable lyrics added) and 'Little Jack Frost Get Lost', in which he is aided by Peggy Lee (Bruns. 05014); this is one of Bing's best.

That same edition carried an article about tape recording but the writer doubted that any real progress would be made with the use of tapes for

home entertainment unless new techniques were to simplify duplication of the original tape to the point where mass production was possible. He continued "Despite these comments, there is no doubt that tape recording is finding a place, an important place, in the recording field and will expand rapidly during the next years." How right he was.

By 1953, the flow of Bing's singles was slowing but a couple of reviews worth reproducing are shown.

March 1953. *The more I listen to modern popular vocalists, the more I am convinced that they are moulded to a set pattern. This, of course, does not apply to Bing Crosby, whose 'Cool Water' (Bruns. 05019) is right up his street, and even the Andrews Sisters do not obtrude, though I could have enjoyed 'South Rampart Street Parade' verso much more without them. Bing also sings 'I Still See Elisa' (Bruns. 05048) from 'Paint Your Wagon' and 'Any Town is Paris When You're Young' in his slow, pensive style that no one has yet successfully imitated.*

April 1953. *Bing Crosby, usually so fine, gets out of his depth with some low notes in 'Silver Moon' (Bruns. 05062) and does better in 'Betsy' verso, though the Andrews Sisters are quite unnecessary.*

Fred Reynolds was not very impressed with 'Silver Moon' either. Have a look at page 11 of Volume 4 of 'The Crosby Collection' to see what I mean. Bing's 10" LPs of reissued material were appearing by now and invariably received kind comments as did his occasional singles.

May 1954 *I suppose a case can be made out for the assertion that the tearful vocalists of the present are in direct lineal descent from Bing Crosby, who started crooning before some of today's aspirants were born, and is still much better than any of them. If you doubt this, listen to 'I Get So Lonely' on Bruns. 05277. Listen to that tongue-in-cheek style, that innate sense of rhythm and timing, and even listen carefully to the accompaniment. Although it's by Guy Lombardo's Royal Canadians, they really get down to a man-size job of work. The other side, 'Young at Heart', is also good; it sums Bing up perfectly. There are two others by the Old Groaner this month; it seems odd that one of them is the old 'I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me', backed by the even older 'Ida', on 05273, but there they are, as listenable now as when first made over fifteen years ago. I like to think that 'My Love, My Love' and 'Secret Love' (05269), the third*

Crosby, will also sound as good in 1969 as they do now.

They will sound as good in 1999 as well! In December 1954 it was noted that EMI "because of the ever increasing demand for modern microgroove recordings, has been reluctantly compelled to make this year a heavier annual deletion of 78 r.p.m. records from its catalogues." It had been the custom for 78s to remain in the catalogues for years but the times were changing. The frequent reissue of Bing's songs on 10" LPs invariably brought favourable comment and the affection felt for Bing by the various reviewers comes over strongly. This was illustrated in the March 1955 edition as it carried a special article headed:

BING SINGS

An Autobiography

Now that the gramophone is only content with recordings of complete oeuvres, with the Mozart bi-centenary already under way, not to mention the complete keyboard works of Couperin, it is only to be expected that this thoroughness should penetrate the field of popular entertainment. There can be few candidates for the privilege of an album containing five twelve-inch LP records, and if these could be counted on the fingers of one hand, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Bing Crosby would head any poll. And here, indeed, are some five hours of the Old Groaner himself.

With these records is an extremely useful and well-written booklet, not only listing the titles recorded but also giving a discography of the available Crosby titles on Brunswick records. The appreciation of the artist is also very well done, particularly in its assessment of Crosby as a phenomenon of contemporary life. The assessment is borne out by the records, and particularly by Mr. Crosby's modest introduction and his linking of the songs with pertinent comment. The personality of the man is strongly put over and it is a very likeable personality that emerges.

The article continues with a description of many of the tracks but it also laments the absence of 'Brother, Can You Spare a Dime' before finishing with the following:

Nevertheless, the whole project has been quite superbly carried out, and there can be little doubt that this album will find a place in any history of our times.

The magazine was now putting asterisks by the

number of certain records being reviewed indicating that they were available on 45 r.p.m. but it was clear that the issue of Bing's singles was slowing much to the disappointment of the reviewers.

May 1956 This is a nap, and so is Bing Crosby in a startling 'Old Man River' with a glorious swing piano on Bruns. 05543*. This is a real surprise.

July 1956 - Outstanding among the 45s is Bing Crosby's 'Sleepy Time Gal' with the Buddy Cole Trio backed by a dull 'No Other Love' with our old friend John Scott Trotter who includes a nice piano solo in his accompaniment. An American correspondent tells me that Crosby is constantly heard on radio in these stylish performances which seldom reach records. One or two of them are reaching us over here, and we could do with more.

However, the LP of 'Anything Goes' did not impress the Gramophone team and neither were they excited in December 1956 when the following appeared in print.

'Songs I Wish I Had Sung' is the title of an LP by Bing Crosby (Brunswick LAT8138). Nobody could fail altogether with 'Paper Doll'. but somehow this is a very untypical Crosby record. It may be that Mr. Crosby was too conscious of those who actually did sing these songs, and the accompanying orchestra sounds off colour and too loud. Many will want the record, but it may cause them misgivings. What we want are more Crosby records in rhythm.

Their prayers were answered but still they were not satisfied.

January 1957... This 'Bing Sings while Bregman Swings' must be the first Crosby record on the HMV label since the Rhythm Boys of the 'twenties. Like last month's LP, this is of songs not previously sung by Der Bingle. The accompaniments sound brash and are too loud - he is surely best with an intimate accompaniment of the Buddy Cole type - and the songs include 'Mountain Greenery', but with all respect is this really a vocal number?

It's funny how that album seems to create controversy when anyone considers it. I was pleasantly surprised to see a review of 'High Tor' in the March 1957 magazine.

'High Tor' was a play by Maxwell Anderson that reached Broadway in 1936. Nineteen years later it was turned into a musical with

tunes by Arthur Schwartz. Bing Crosby appears in extracts with Julie Andrews and others on *Brunswick* LAT8154. The story is about as comprehensible as *Barrie's 'Mary Rose'*, but Crosby's linking narrative shows again what a pleasant actor he is. Here is something of the art which conceals art. Apart from *'John Barleycorn'*, the songs are not very distinguished, but Miss Andrews, currently in *'My Fair Lady'*, sings charmingly and Crosby works his usual spell.

I like the quote 'the art which conceals art'. How very true this was of Bing. Another track which often causes controversy is *'Seven Nights a Week'* which was mentioned in October, 1957.

'Man on Fire' (easy lilt and easy on the ear, more so than Jimmy Young's on *Decca F10925**) and *'Seven Nights a Week'*, which is a rocker, and very pleasing too.

That was a surprise! Bing's reissues continued to attract warm and friendly comment but the next major new work reached the pages of the magazine in April, 1959:

Even so for the duet-warbling of the month I would turn to R.C.A. SF5022 (Mono RD27105): 'Fancy Meeting You Here', with Rosemary Clooney and the old Groaner himself, Bing Crosby, bumping amicably into each other in a dozen stage sets, scattered round the world - 'Hindustan', 'Brazil', and so forth, with a good new one, 'Calcutta'. The Billy May accompaniments throughout are first class, and so, obviously, is the singing; but principally it is the infectious easy-going humour of the record which remains in the mind.

EPs were being regularly reviewed and I had to smile at the following in the September 1959 edition as it contrasted somewhat with the thoughts expressed in the January 1957 review.

Bing Crosby himself is represented by an extract from his LP of 'Bing Sings While Bregman Swings', including 'Mountain Greenery' which was made for him if ever a song was, on HMV 7EG8475.

In June 1960, a major review of the progress of the long playing record was spread over eight pages of *'The Gramophone'* with Compton Mackenzie opining:

Technical progress has of course been great, nevertheless it is difficult to appreciate that in so short a time a revolution has taken place, the microgroove has ousted the 78, the

industry itself has trebled its size and we now see the standard long-playing record moving towards the wings, to allow the bright new star, stereo, to encompass the whole stage.

Funny how you forget about stereo records coming in, don't you? Favourable words were seen for albums such as *'How The West Was Won'* and for *'Bing and Louis'*. The launch of the *Ace of Hearts* label was noted in November 1961 with Bing featuring on AH1 with *'Old Masters - Vol. 1'*. As seemed to be customary, each of the issues containing Bing's old songs was welcomed with these comments from the June 1962 issue being typical.

I must be getting old or something, because Bing Crosby is still my idea of the perfect all-round singer; another album of his 'Old Masters' - the third in the series - is on Ace of Hearts AH24. No one else could infuse the feeling, the charm, the gaiety and sentiment into these as could El Bingo.

In the September 1962 edition, the Bing's Hollywood series was noted thus.

Starting with Bing Crosby, I have to report no fewer than fifteen sets of his Hollywood hits, dating from 1934 to 1956, and issued on Brunswick with his own special serial - BING-1 to BING-15. The transfers from the older discs have been beautifully done, and if haven't heard how these songs should be sung, here is a chance in a million to rectify the omission. All are mono, of course.

Occasional favourable mentions of reissue LPs and singles were seen as the sixties unfolded with nice words for *'Return to Paradise'* in the May 1964 edition. However *'Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits'* did not fare so well in May 1966.

Bing Crosby also turns his eyes Nashvillewards on the Capitol LP T2346 (ST2346), and that too is third-rate. 'Heartaches By The Number' / 'Wolverton Mountain' and whatnot make easy listening but poor Crosby.

Conversely, in January 1969, Bing's album *'Thoroughly Modern Bing'* was welcomed:

Meanwhile there is overwhelming evidence that Mr. Crosby has lost none of charm or skill in 'Thoroughly Modern Bing'. He works his lasting magic on 'Talk to the Animals', 'Love is Blue', 'Chim Chim Cheree' and other modern songs of quality plus the oldie 'Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead' with the same ease and warmth that was discernible in 1928. He even transforms a blatant flag-waver like 'What's More American'

into something tolerable, and is the first singer to hold my attention throughout 'Puff (The Magic Dragon)' without causing a single wince.

The regard and affection for Bing was tangible and even the 'Hey Jude' album received kind treatment in July 1969. But what did the reviewers make of 'Bing'n' Basie' in November 1972?

There is a veritable meeting of the mighty in the shape of 'Bing 'n' Basie' featuring Bing Crosby with Count Basie and his orchestra and it is remarkably pleasant to give Mr Crosby his just pride of place again here so soon after welcoming the three Coral reissue albums of Vintage Crosbyana. His voice is showing its age nowadays as in the case of Frank Sinatra, but it is still miles ahead of any other singer in terms of individuality, phrasing and mellow relaxation. Mr Crosby deals with some superior examples of modern pop songwriting such as 'Gentle On My Mind'; 'Everything Is Beautiful'; 'Snowbird' and 'Little Green Apples' with his customary aplomb and expertise, and he receives some wonderful support from Mr Basie and his orchestra.

The Coral LPs were gleefully welcomed in several magazines during the 1970s with the description of 'electronic stereo' invariably added. I have to admit that I never liked this echo effect as it seemed to take away the essential intimacy of Bing's voice but probably others were pleased with this development. I was surprised not to find more reviews of the albums Bing did with Ken Barnes and the only one seen was in the December 1977 issue.

Sadness inevitably surrounds 'Beautiful Memories' by the late Bing Crosby, which must be one of the last LPs we will enjoy by this splendid gentleman with fifty years of consummate artistry to his credit, although we are advised of at least one more in the pipeline, this time from Polydor. It is not his best album by any means, but Crosby never made a bad one to my knowledge, and there is much of value and interest in his versions of mostly recent pop ballads such as 'A Little Love and Understanding', 'My Resistance is Low', 'When a Child is Born', 'What I Did For Love' and 'The Woman on Your Arm'. It is certainly a very adequate valedictory souvenir from a singer who has left beautiful memories for a multitude around the world.

The same edition contained a tribute by Ken Barnes himself which makes very good reading and Ken was featured again in the June 1979 issue.

What would you say to a double album of some

of Bing Crosby's most popular songs sung by the great man in his prime but in modern stereo recordings? Impossible? In 'Songs of a Lifetime' Philips offer us 36 real standards in original recordings made privately by Bing and the Buddy Cole quartet between 1954 and 1960 for broadcast on his CBS radio shows, now refurbished by the addition of orchestral accompaniments recently recorded in London under Pete Moore (he and producer Ken Barnes worked with Bing on six of the albums from his Indian Summer in the studios). The results are fascinating. The songs are all winners and they're sung with all the freshness and warmth that were among Bing's special gifts. The sound is not altogether convincing, but very clean and lively; the original tapes were certainly in fine condition.

References to Bing are sparse from then on in 'The Gramophone' and younger reviewers lacking affection for the great man surfaced as exemplified by this review in April 1982.

'Sentimental' collects 14 tracks recorded in London in 1976 by Bing Crosby, then well past his best but apparently recording for all and sundry (at around that time new releases came from United Artists and London, as well as Decca - all of them exposing to a greater or lesser degree the ageing of a once-great voice). Nevertheless much of the Crosby warmth remains in these songs - mostly standard and including 'What's New?', 'I'm Getting Sentimental Over You' and 'At Last'.

Well, that's only his opinion! Bing was however generally well served by 'The Gramophone' over the years as these extracts have confirmed. The magazine was after all only echoing public opinion and I must say how satisfying it was to read through the pages sent to me by Trevor Wagstaff. The final pages provided by Trevor cover the advent of 'the new sound system - compact disc digital audio' in March 1983. Fibre needles to CDs in just over 50 years! Thanks again, Trevor for sharing this information with us.

Malcolm Macfarlane

What the papers say

THE PALM BEACH POST

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 1998

3F

EMPLOYMENT

Bing knew: Knowledge is power in his movies

Art does imitate work life.

Two Bing Crosby movies discuss discrimination, demonstrate the value of technological expertise and research, illustrate how poor management, lack of vision and hidden agendas affect an organization, demonstrate how to build a team and the power of networking.

In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, a bump on the noggin sends Bing, a blacksmith's apprentice, back a few centuries to a not-so-merry olde England with only an almanac, a magnifying glass and his "up-to-date" knowledge base.

There he sticks out like a sore thumb because his dress and speech are different from those around him.

Because he is so different, the people fear him. How many times do we stereotype others because they are different?

Crosby is brought before King Arthur to stand judgment. Merlin, the court magician, pushes for his execution. Bing saves himself by demonstrating that his magic is greater than Merlin's. He starts a fire using the magnifying glass to focus the sun's rays on some thatch.

Merlin can't duplicate the feat because he doesn't know how to use the magnifying glass.

Knowledge is power.

Thus Bing is knighted, taking the appropriate title, Sir Boss.

He quickly gains the confidence of the king because of his vast knowledge. Merlin and his henchmen, who were the power



Jim Pawlak
Career moves

behind the throne, do their best to discredit Sir Boss. They are thwarted at every turn because of Crosby's knowledge, much of it gleaned from the pages of the almanac. Sir Boss makes and uses a pistol to protect himself and combines his horsemanship with a lariat to outmaneuver his armor-encumbered, slow-moving foes during a joust. Basic skills combined with technological ones make a powerful package these days, too.

Sir Boss quickly realizes that the king is out of touch with the day-to-day workings of his kingdom. Surrounded by people with their own agendas, Arthur is told only what he wants to hear. He and Arthur don disguises and journey around the country to see how the people are really living. Arthur learns that, as CEO of England, he knows little of what goes on outside the executive office in Camelot. He vows to get in touch and stay in touch with his subordinates. Sounds like a great plan for today's managers.

In *Going My Way*, Crosby plays the young Father O'Malley who is sent by the bishop to take the place of an old priest who has stayed at one parish far too long. The likable old priest has let time

pass him by. He believes that what always worked will always work. As a result, his parish has fallen on hard times. How many businesses can survive if they don't stay on the cutting edge?

Father O'Malley is drawn to the kids in the neighborhood because he speaks their language. He takes them from the baseball field to the choir loft. The scene where he divides them into soprano, alto and bass and teaches them to sing notes and chords before combining voices into a song is a treat for anyone wanting to know how to build a team.

O'Malley bumps into an old friend, now an opera diva. As they catch up on what each has been doing, he tells her about the choir and some songs he wrote. She offers to get some talent agents to an audition and agrees to sing one of the ballads to add credibility. This is a great example of a network at work.

The audition goes poorly. The talent agents don't want love songs. They want something fresh. Crosby and the choir swing into an upbeat number, *Would You Like To Swing On A Star*. The agents buy the song on the spot. Once again, change is the constant that propels progress.

There's a lot more than just entertainment in these Bing Crosby films.

Write to Jim Pawlak c/o The Palm Beach Post, P.O. Box 24700, West Palm Beach, Fla. 33416-4700. Or e-mail him at careermoves@hotmail.com

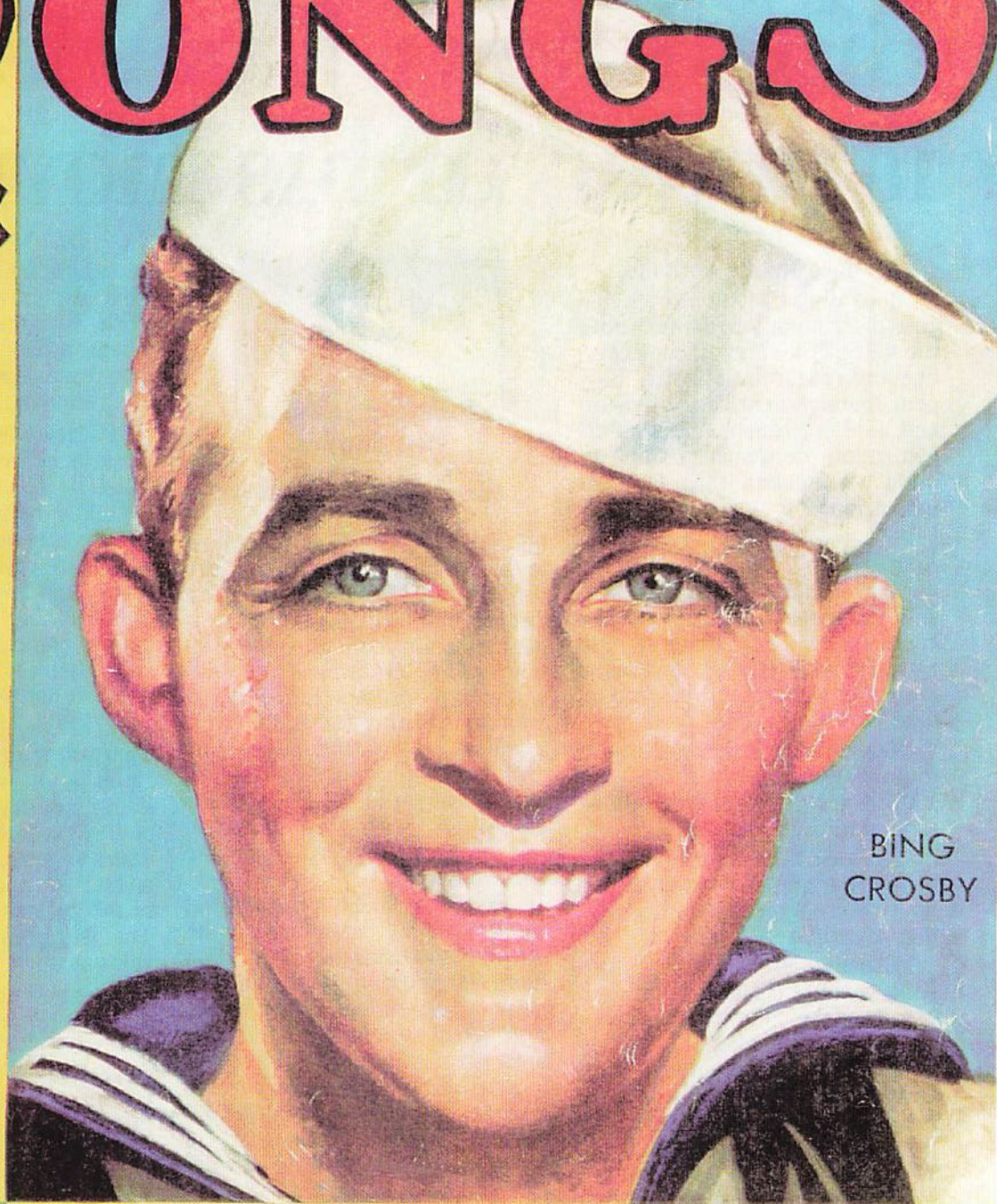
Popular SONGS

10¢

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BING
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The Story of
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